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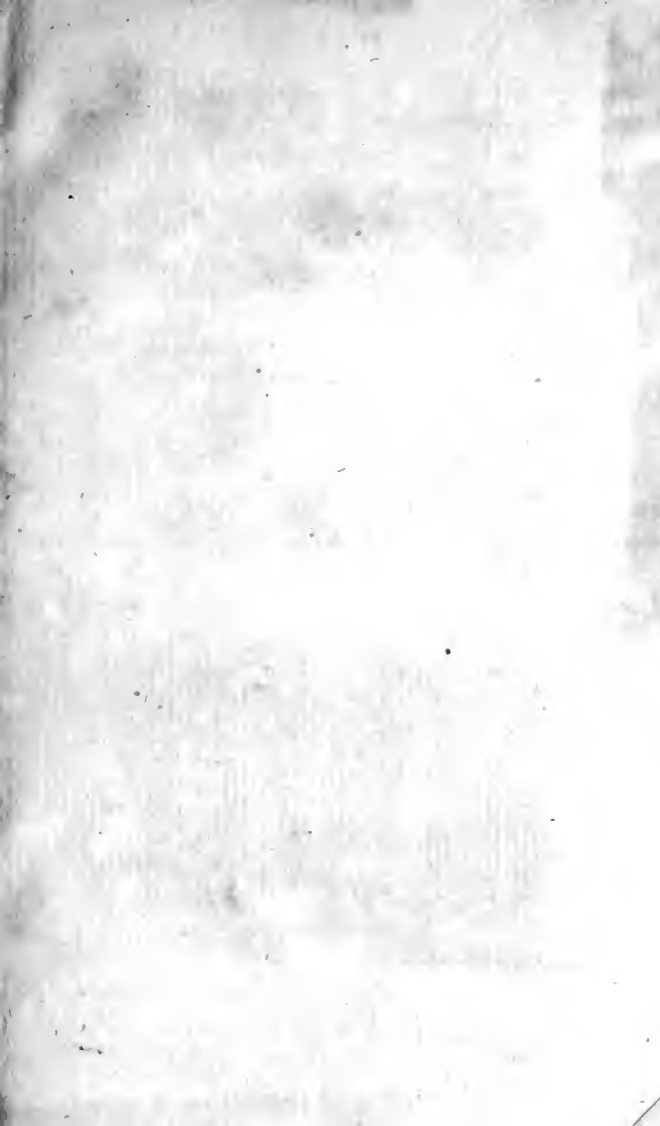
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# THE JEWISH SPY:

BEING A  
PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL and  
CRITICAL *Correspondence*,

By LETTERS

Which lately pass'd between certain *J E W S*  
in *Turky, Italy, France, &c.*

Translated from the ORIGINALS into *French*,

By the MARQUIS D'ARGENS;  
*And now done into English.*

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOL. II.



L O N D O N :

Printed for D. BROWNE, without *Temple-Bar*; R. HETT,  
in the *Poultry*; J. SHUCKBURGH, in *Fleet-street*;  
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the *Strand*. M DCC XLIV.





To his pretended MAJESTY

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v. 2

*THEODORE I.*

King of *CORSICA.*

*S I R E,*



**W**ILL YOUR MAJESTY permit me to present you with the Translation of the Second Volume of *Lettres Juives!* I am aware that, considering the *Devil* of a Patron to whom I chose to dedicate the First Volume, you may perhaps think it

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iv      *D E D I C A T I O N.*

extraordinary that I shou'd presume to prefix so august a Name as Yours at the Head of this. But if you will please to recollect, SIRE, that, before your Arrival in *Corfica*, you were almost as obscure as *Jemmy* ——— You will pardon my Boldness.

W H A T a Misfortune it is for the *Hebrew* Nation, that you did not take it into your Head to set up for King of *Jerusalem* ! Surely you cou'd not have fail'd of as great Success in such an Undertaking, as in that which renders you Master of an Estate that lawfully belongs to the *Genoese*. What a Lustre would it have given to the *Jews*, if you had but been pleas'd to have personated the *Messiah* whom they expect ! And how happy would it have been for that People, to have had an Adventurer at their Head, so enterprising as you are ! Perhaps you thought it wou'd be a Task too difficult, and decline it for fear you shou'd not succeed ; but you wou'd have found considerable Supplies from the *Jews* of *Austerdam*. I will venture, SIRE, to give you a Piece of wholesome Advice :

Advice: If you are driven out of *Corfica*, get yourself circumcis'd, and carry a People who only wait for a Deliverer, to the Banks of *Jordan*: But if you would win the Hearts of the *Hebrews*, you must govern them more mildly than you do the *Corficans*; for the *Israelites* don't love to be shot to death, and you'll never obtain your Will of 'em by Severity.

I N my Opinion you tread much in the Steps of those who conquer'd the New World; *Ferdinando Cortes* treated the *Mexicans* just as you treat the *Corficans*. Did you catch the Genius of that *Spanish* General in your Travels in *Spain*? Remember that he made Use of the Difference of Religion as a Cloak for his Cruelties. But the People with whom you bear the Sway, are of the Catholic and Apostolic Church of *Rome*. Perhaps you take the Duke of *Alva* for your Model; if so, SIRE, you follow a bad one. He lost half of the *Netherlands*, where his Barbarity contributed not a little to the Forming of the Republic of *Holland*.

BELIEVE me therefore, SIRE, your pretended Majesty had better take Pattern from a Number of Great Men, who with all their Valour and Courage were always ready to pardon. *Henry IV. of France*, to whom YOUR MAJESTY is no more a kin, than *St. Crispin* is to the GREAT GOD, conquer'd his Kingdom as much by Good-nature, as by Arms.

BY imitating that Hero, you wou'd attract the Hearts of all Mankind. The Inhabitants of your new Empire will be fond of you, and Foreigners will flock to offer you their Service. The Count *de Bonneval* will quit the Turban to come and be General of your Forces: The Baron *de Pollnitz* will put on his little Band again to be your Chaplain: The Duke *de Ripperda* will abandon the Interest of the King of *Morocco* to be your Minister of State: And I can assure YOUR MAJESTY, that if a Breach between me and my Family had not been made up a few Days ago, I should have embrac'd the Post of your Chancellor with great Pleasure. But you will not want  
illu-



# DEDICATION. vii

illustrious Personages to fill that high Station, and I promise you that I will take care to inform my self what Persons may be deserving of the Employment, and to give YOUR MAJESTY a faithful Account.

I am, with a profound Respect,

S I R E,

*Your pretended MAJESTY'S*

*Most humble, and*

*most abedient Servant,*

M. D.



# P R E F A C E.

By M. D.

**I**N my Preface to the First Volume I gave a general Answer to the Invectives thrown out against me, from the overflowing Zeal of certain Bigots, the fiery Advocates of every Person that wears a Cowl and Sandals. I promis'd them that I would spare the Monks hereafter, and have kept my Word with 'em, for in this Volume they are only mention'd occasionally.

I have endeavour'd that the Translation shou'd be correct and concise, having taken more than ordinary Pains to render the Sense of my Author, and to give it the Air of an Original; in which too many Translations are very deficient.

But notwithstanding all that I have done to merit the Esteem and Approbation of the Public, the Bigots rave still, and cry out incessantly, We are really much obliged (say they) to this same Translator; he promis'd us to spare our Friends the Monks, and now he ridicules our dear Sisters the Nuns. Yet the one are as sacred as the other; and his Second Volume as richly deserves the Flames as the First. What has quite exasperated them is the Jokes of Jacob Brito upon certain Bones and Rags, which by the Consecration of Avarice are term'd Sacred Reliques. They wou'd give all the Money they raise in one Year from their Pious Frauds, if they cou'd but have their Ends of me. They publish every where that I am a Man of no Religion;

gion; that none but an *Enemy to the Deity* wou'd presume to translate the *Lettres Juives*; and as an evident Proof of their Accusation, they alledge that I have made a *Jest of St. Christopher's Chine-Bone*, and the *Prophet Jeremiah's Tooth*. I might think it a sufficient Answer, that when a *Work is translating*, it should be render'd just as the *Author compos'd it*; and that the *Translators of Lucretius were never prosecuted for the Opinions of that Philosopher*. But I wave this Argument, and wou'd have them to know, tho' they affirm I have no Religion, that the *Jews Letters contain no more than what is said every Day by the Launois, the Mabillons, and other sensible Catholics*; I will admit, in short, that there are some bold Strokes in them. Are such not to be pardon'd in a Jew?

I proceed to another Article of their Complaint, viz. the severe Censures which are pass'd in the Letters upon the Court of Rome. To this I have but one Word to say: Let it be observ'd that *Aaron Monceca*, as much a Jew as he is, scarce ever speaks of the sovereign Pontiff; but as a particular Prince and Master of Rome. 'Tis even possible for a Writer to lash the Vices and Avarice of a corrupted Court; and yet be a good Catholic; of which this is a plain Proof. Pope Pius II, before he had a Thought of ever rising to the sovereign Pontificate, and assuming no other Stile as yet than *Æneas Silvius the Poet*, writes in the following Terms to his Friend John Perigel; *Nihil est, quod absque argento Romana Curia non dedat; nam & ipse manus Impositiones, & Spiritus Sancti Dona venduntur; nec Peccatorum venia nisi Nummatis impenditur. Serva igitur Aurum, ut, cum opus sit, præsto requiras.* \* i. e. *There is nothing but what may be had at*

\* *Æneæ Sylvii, seu Pii II. Opera, p. 149.*

*the Court of Rome for Money; the Laying on of Hands; the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; the Forgiveness of Sins; every thing, in short, is sold at Rome dear enough. Save your Money therefore to serve you in a time of Need.*

*If there be any thing said as bold as this in all the Lettres Juives, I am ready to own that I was in the wrong to translate them: But if, on the contrary, Aaron Monceca has been much modefter than Pius II, the Votaries must allow that he has said no more than what a staunch Roman Catholic may say, since I don't believe that they will presume to maintain that this Pope was not a Catholic. And if they cou'd but get rid of the Prejudices that blind them, they wou'd see that the Fundamentals of Religion have nothing in common with the Vices of particular Persons, who abuse it, and cannot be sufficiently blam'd. How happy wou'd it be if it were possible to purge the Court of Rome thoroughly from Ambition and Avarice, by the mere Dint of Reproach!*

*Before I conclude this Preface, I shall answer some other Objections. Aaron Monceca is reproach'd for condemning all the Jansenists in the Lump, though there are among them very honest People. They who have started this Objection, have not duly examin'd this Work, or they wou'd have seen that the Jansenists are distinguish'd into two Classes. Those of former Days, who are worthy of the Esteem of all good Men, such as the Arnaulds, the Paschals, and the Sacis, are commended in twenty Places. The Fathers of the Oratory, who are Advocates for the Opinions of those great Men, have never been once mention'd in these Letters; thus when mention is made of the Jansenists, it must be understood of the Sect of Convulsionaries, Men known to be fanatical, malignant, dangerous Knaves.*

*The Jesuits are offended to find their Society represented as ambitious and formidable. But really wou'd not they themselves laugh at any one that should say that they are humble, careful to avoid Honour, and not affected with the Riches and Splendor of this World? Has it not been confess'd that their Behaviour is pure, that they are learned, civil, polite, and honest too, as private Men? Aaron Monceca wou'd perhaps have said more, but he was afraid of telling a Lye.*

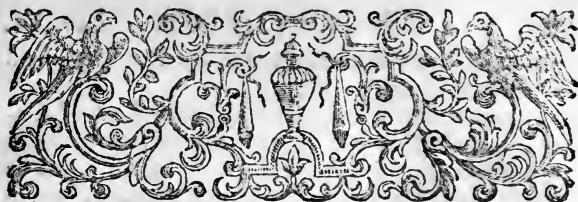
*Some French People, who never praise any Country but their own, have complain'd that Aaron Monceca has shewn as much Friendship and Partiality for the Dutch, as Arouet de Voltaire has for the English. This Hebrew knew the Merit and Virtues of that Nation: and he was too much of a Philosopher to restrain himself, and to disguise his Sentiments.*

*Besides, if he had found the same Qualities among other People that he commended among the Dutch, he wou'd have applauded them in like manner. His Sincerity has made him find fault with the pernicious Maxims of the Converters. Happy are they who follow his Principles, which are so agreeable to the Law of Nature, that they need no Apology. The extravagant Rant of the furious Catholics has given him Cause, more than once, to commend the Mildness and Wisdom of the Dutch Government. It seems that he has an Affection for the Nazarene Protestants, and that his Friendship for them was created by their Loyalty to their Princes, and especially to Henry IV, his Hero, on whose Head they saved the Crown, when certain stupid Catholics endeavour'd to dethrone him. I must add at the Close, that if the Lettres Juives are tax'd with containing any Passages contrary to the Sentiments of the High-flying Catholics, those very Catholics will, however, be obliged to own, that it were to be wish'd that all People wou'd think as he  
does,*

does, upon moral Precepts, and the Respect due to Sovereigns.

For the rest, I shall, in the Translation of the three following Volumes, endeavour to merit that Fondness the Public discover'd for the First Volume, which has had so quick a Vent as has exceeded my Expectation, and defeated the Hopes of those, to whose Bigotry the Currency of this Work is altogether repugnant.





THE  
JEWISH SPY.

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LETTER XLI.

*From* AARON MONCECA, *at Paris, to*  
ISAAC ONIS, *a Rabbi, at Constanti-*  
*nople.*

**I**Went Yesterday to see the *Italian* Comedy, and was charm'd with the unaffected, and at the same time the just Action of the Performers. The Probability I perceiv'd in it, made me the fonder of it, because of its Approach to Reality. Comedy being the Picture of Human Life, the Comedian can only please by his Imitation of the Original which he copies : Let a Play be ever so good in itself, yet, if it be perform'd by mean Actors, it droops ; whereas on the contrary, a Piece that won't bear so much as to be read, often succeeds well in the Hands of good Comedians. This is the Case of most of the Pieces that are play'd upon the *Italian* Theatre: They have more of Shew than Substance, and the Representa-

tation of them is amusing, but the Reading insipid and uninforming.

Some Authors had invented a new Sort of Comedy, in which the Pleasantries of a Harlequin were accompanied with a grave Moral \*. The *Italian* Scene in the Hands of these Authors, was in a fair Way to have become a worthy younger Sister of the *Latin* and the *French*. But some pitiful Writers † who came after them, have reduced it to be as bad as ever; for in almost all their Pieces the Regularity of conducting them, the Uniformity of Characters, the Prudence of Behaviour, are sacrificed to the Pleasure of raising a Laugh in the Pit by a Joke, or by some odd and improbable Incident.

The *Italian* Comedy has met with various Turns at *Paris*. In the last Reign it was quite banish'd out of *France*; for the Licentiousness with which it exposed Persons of the Highest Rank to the Ridicule of the Lowest, subjected it to Proscription by the Authority of the Sovereign. But some Years after, the Duke Regent recall'd it from Banishment, and brought it again to *Paris*. The Punishment of the Old Comedians render'd the New ones more cautious, so that they omitted what might be offensive to private Persons, at the same time that they left enough of the Agreeable in their Plays to amuse the Public; for they found in the *French* Comedians dangerous Rivals, whose real Merit would have

\* This one sees with pleasure in the Pieces entitled, *La Double Inconstance*, *La Surprise de l'Amour*, &c. by MARIVAUX. *Timon le Misantrope*, *Arlequin Sauvage*, &c. by DE LILLE, who died some Years ago at *Paris*, and not the Physicians at the *Hague*, as some have absurdly advanced.

† ROMAGNESI, LELIO the Son, and others.

eclips'd



eclips'd the Tinsel of their Theatre, if they had not made amends for its Deficiency by the Goodness of their Performance.

The *French* Comedies and Tragedies are the Rivals of the *Greek*; and if the modern Plays do not exceed the antient ones, yet there is no Man of Learning who is unprejudiced, that will dispute their being equal to them; and for my own part I should in many Cases be tempted to allow them the Superiority.

There is not a Comic Writer among the *Latins*, that has united so many Talents together as *Moliere* has done. *Terence* wrote in a pure Stile: His Characters are perfectly natural: He does not barely relate Things, but actually places them in your View; and his Plays are throughout judiciously conducted. But he wanted Fire, Imagination and a Variety in Characters; so that if of the six Plays which we have of his, five had been lost, we should still have *Terence* intire. In all his Comedies we find a knavish Footman, a debauch'd or amorous young Fellow, a covetous Father, &c. and after a Person has read his *Andria*, he meets with no new Instruction in his other Plays, nor any thing to amuse the Mind, but Fiction.

*Plautus* tho' he did not want for Wit, nor for Variety, especially in his Characters, which abound with it, is often deficient in Stile; and in his best Plays he is sometimes guilty of mean Expressions, unworthy of a good Taste.

But where do we find more Variety, more Dignity, more Exactness in Characters, more Accuracy and Perspicuity in Stile, than in the *Misanthrope*, the *Femmes Savantes*, the *Tartuffe*, the *Pacheux*, the *Ecole des Femmes*, and that of *Des Maris*? I should be apt to prefer *Moliere's* good Plays to those of the *Greek* Poets; and to think even the *Italian* Farces

better than the bad ones, which he wrote to please the Taste of the Vulgar, because tho' they are equally faulty, yet the *Italian* Farces are more shewy.

The *French* have, to my thinking, carried their Tragedy to a greater Pitch of Perfection. The *Romans* never had any thing of this kind that could deserve the Attention of nice Judges. The Tragedies of *Seneca* are the Productions of a Declaimer, rather than the Works of a Tragic Author: He neither has enough of the Sublime to ravish my Soul, nor enough of the Tender and Pathetic to melt me. All the Sentences with which his Writings abound, are not capable of affecting me; and he does not inspire me either with Terror, Fear or Pity.

The *Romans* very much extoll'd the *Thyestes* of *Varius*, and the *Medea* of *Ovid*. 'Tis pity that Time has not preserv'd those two Pieces, for I don't question but they were very beautiful, since *Ovid* perfectly knew the Passions, and no body had so lively a Way of expressing the Sentiments of a raving Lover. His *Heroines* are sure Vouchers to us of the Beauties of his Tragedy; but the Goodness of a Work which is in being, is not to be estimated by the Reputation of another not certainly known.

*Sophocles* and *Euripides* rais'd the Theatre among the *Greeks* as high as possible. *Corneille* and *Racine* improved it to Perfection among the *French*; and in order to judge of the Preference between those Authors, 'tis my Opinion that it must be determin'd by that which ought to be given to the Taste of the *Athenians* and the *Parisians*. There are few *Frenchmen* now-a-days, except certain Idolizers of Antiquity, that will allow the *Greek* Theatre to be superior to theirs. 'Tis true, this Opinion is not  
so

so generally receiv'd in foreign Nations; yet it has a good many Adherents.

I dare maintain that there is more Grandeur, Dignity and Majesty in *Corneille* than in *Sophocles*; for the latter, tho' endowed with a sublime Genius, and worthy of the Admiration of all good Judges, had not that Variety in the different Characters, nor that Energy and Truth in his Portraits.

*Racine*, to the Tender and Pathetic of *Euripides*, often join'd the Grand and the Sublime of *Sophocles* and *Corneille*; and perhaps the only Fault of his Works was, that they were too perfect; for so many Beauties continually succeeding each other, are the Reason why some Passages don't strike the Imagination so much as they would have done, had there been Faults to set them off.

Two modern Poets have succeeded to the Glory of those great Men; indeed they have not equall'd them, but they have perfectly copied after them, and that so nicely, that they seem to be Originals. The one \* affects the Mind and the Heart alternately with Love, Pity, and Terror; the other † an excellent Versifier, a bold Genius, and a Man of vast Capacity, has chalk'd out a new Method to himself. He has embellish'd the Theatre with Plans, which as they seem'd new and extraordinary, ran the hazard of being condemn'd, and has just publish'd a Tragedy of three Acts, in which Piece there is not one Female Character; so that Love is entirely banish'd out of it: Now the want of this Passion, which is the Life of the Theatre, and let certain Critics say what they will, the surest Means of reaching to the Heart, has forced the Author to reduce his Work to three Acts. He was sensible that all the Policy, all the Grandeur

\* *Crebillon*. † *Voltaire*.

of *Rome* would be insufficient to carry him on to a fifth Act, without falling into cold Declamations, which take away the Spirit of Action. There is no modern Piece in which Love has not some little share, or enough to introduce at least a Woman to help to conduct the Action to its End, and to keep it from the cold Assistance of Narrations and Episodes.

As to the antient Tragedies, in which Number we may reckon *Racine's Athalia* and *Esther*, the Chorusses make great amends for the Brevity of the Acts. If certain Pieces of *Euripides* and *Sophocles* were to be represented without the Chorusses, they would scarce hold half an Hour. Thus the Music, Singing, and the Interludes, spun out the Time to the Length of the modern Tragedies.

That new Piece which I mention'd to thee, is entitled, *The Death of Julius Cæsar*: The Character of that Emperor is conformable to the Idea which has been transmitted of him to us by Antiquity. He is ambitious, eloquent, intrepid, friendly, and generous: The Author describes him to the Life in five Verses; and the Picture which he draws of him is the more ingenious, because he has been so happy as to make *Cæsar* himself give it from his own Mouth, speaking to *Anthony*, when he press'd him to punish certain Senators that might be capable of shortning his Days.

*Je les aurois punis, si je les pouvois craindre:  
 Je me conseille point de me faire haïr.  
 Je scai combattre, vaincre, & ne scai point punir.  
 Allons: & n'écoutez ni soupçons, ni vengeance.  
 Sur l'Univers soumis régnez sans violence.*

Punish I surely would, did I but fear them;  
 Counsel me not how to get Hatred.

I know what 'tis to fight and conquer, but know  
not how to punish.

Then let's be deaf to Jealousy and Revenge,  
And rule th'obedient Universe without Violence.

This Character is the more beautiful, and gives the more Pleasure, because it seems natural, and taken from the Life, for 'tis *Cæsar* that draws his own Picture in discovering his most secret Sentiments to his Confidant. These are happy Plans. A Character which conducts the Action to the End, has much more Effect than a cold Description of the Qualities or Vices of any one Person by another.

*Racine* has succeeded however in that which the Vizier *Achmet* gives of the Sultan *Ibrahim*: Its Brevity, its Justness, and the Situation of the Person who gives it, have render'd this Passage a complete Piece.

*L'imbecille Ibrahim, sans craindre sa Naissance,  
Traîne exempt de Péril une éternelle Enfance,  
Indigne également, de Vivre, & de Mourir,  
On l'abandonné aux Mains qui daignent le nourir\*.*

The Ideot *Ibrahim*, regardless of his Birth,  
Is always in a state of Childhood free from Peril.  
Being of Life and Death alike unworthy,  
He is abandon'd to those Hands that deign to feed  
him.

I had rather have been the Author of these four Verses, than all *Seneca's* Tragedies. I don't believe 'tis possible to equal the Perspicuity and Exactness with which he has described the Tranquility wherein the Brother of a Sultan liv'd at the Scraglio. But every body has not succeeded so well as *Racine*. Therefore it is my Opinion that Tragedy

\* *Racine, Bajazet, Scene I.*

absolutely requires that the Persons who are introduced, should draw their own Pictures as much as 'tis possible in the nature of the Thing; for then the Characters are more striking, and remain with deeper Impression upon the Imagination: And when this is not possible, care must be taken to characterize the Person spoken of in a concise Manner, not like an Orator, or a Declaimer.

*Brutus, Cassius, Cimber*, and the other Senators who conspired against *Cæsar*, are characterized with too much Uniformity in the Scene of that Piece, where they are speaking to *Julius Cæsar*. Methinks I see a Rabble of Deputies from a Country Village haranguing a Governor of a Province, on the Impossibility of paying their Taxes, and every one speaking a short Sentence in his Turn, all to the same Purpose, *We have no Money*. Consequently the *Roman* Senators will have no King.

The Character of *Anthony* is beautiful. He is drawn such as he ought to be, a zealous Friend of *Cæsar*, an Enemy to Liberty, incapable of serving under any other than so great a Master. See how he describes himself speaking to *Julius Cæsar*;

*Antoine, tu le sçais, ne connoit point l'Envie,  
J'ai chéri, plus que toi, la Gloire de ta vie.  
J'ai préparé la Chaine où tu metz les Romains,  
Content d'être sous toi le plus grand des Humains.  
Plus fier de t'attacher ce nouveau Diademe,  
Plus grand de te servir, que de régner moi-même.*

*Anthony*, thou knowest, knows not Envy;  
I've been more tender of thy Honour, than thou  
thyself.

'Twas I prepar'd thy Chain to bind the *Romans*,  
Content to be the Greatest Man next to thyself.

More proud of crowning thee with this new Diadem ;

More great to be thy Subject than a Monarch.

The last Scene of this Tragedy is a magnificent Piece. The Majesty of the Sentiments, and the Loftiness of the Expressions are the more suitable to it, because tho' *Anthony* could not but be troubled in his Mind, he harangues the People in order to seduce them, and to animate them against the Murderers of *Cæsar*. Thus, affected Expressions which are disgusting from a Man overwhelmed with Grief, and which are condemn'd in the Rehearsal of *Theramenes*, are proper here, and produce a good Effect in the Minds of the Spectators.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and may God grant thee Riches in abundance.



## LETTER XLII.

From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Rabbi, at Constantinople.

Y Esterday a Friend of mine carried me to a Convent of the *Nazarene* Friars, where I spent part of the Day, and enquired diligently into their Behaviour, and monastic Way of Life. I said to the Friar, into whose Chamber my Friend carried me, *What is it you amuse yourselves with in this Retirement? I pray to God*, said he, *that I may be soon the Procurator or Guardian, in order to have the Pleasure sometimes of going out of it. In the meantime I drink, eat, sleep, and sing in the Choir. This,*

said I, *cannot be enough to employ you all the Day.* I have no other Business, *reply'd he,* and for ten Years that I have been a Monk, I don't remember that I have done any thing else. During our Conversation I heard a little Bell ring: Now, *says he,* 'tis half an Hour past four o'Clock; with your leave, I'll quit you for a Moment, for my Duty calls me to the Refectory. My Friend, who had been used for a long Time to banter him, ask'd him, Why he did not stay for the second Table, in order to go to Supper? I will lay a wager, *continued he,* that you have a double Mefs. You are right, *reply'd the Monk,* we live to-day at the Expence of a rich Farmer of the Revenue, who regularly gives an Entertainment once a Week to the whole Convent. This Benefactor is the Penitent of the Reverend Father Guardian. He does Things to Perfection. Your Father Guardian, *reply'd my Friend,* had better enjoin him to provide less good Cheer for you, and to rob the Public less, for Monsieur D\*\*\* passes for a very great Knave. As our Conversation was not very pleasing to the Monk, who stood upon Thorns all the Time, for fear that his Mefs would be diminish'd, he made us a profound Bow, went away for half an Hour, and then came again to us with an Air of Gaiety and Satisfaction. Our Brother *Maurice,* *says he,* has outdone himself to-day: He had procured some Veal that was wonderfully good, and the Convent will sustain a considerable Loss whenever he leaves it. I would with all my Heart give the first ten Crowns which I shall pocket when I am Procurator of the Convent, that he were but ten Years younger. You will hardly fare so well to-morrow, *said I.* Pardon me, *said he,* we are to dine to-morrow upon the Charity of a rich Widow, which is dispensed to us twice every Month: She has



has already sent in abundance of good Cheer. You are very happy, said I, to live so much at your Ease: You have Lodging and Food, without being obliged to take care for it: You get enough by singing for half an Hour, to subsist you for a Fortnight.

Ah! reply'd the Friar, you know but little of the Monastic Life, and the sad State of those who embrace it, which is more melancholy and tiresome, than the Fate of a Slave in *Turky*; for his Servitude does not hinder him from getting Money, and then he has the Hopes that some Day or other it will be at an End, But a Monk is doom'd for ever to a Captivity, which is the more cruel, because he is under the Command of Masters that are more barbarous than the severest Captains of *Morocco* and *Salle*. Is any thing so hard as to be a Slave to the Will and Pleasure of a Man, who being himself uneasy with his own Condition, revenges himself upon others for his miserable Situation, and makes them answerable for his Misfortunes? You give me, said I, Father, a very strange Account of your Fate; so that I wonder to see so many People turn Friars every Day, and to find the Convents so well stock'd. Error and Youth, said he, are the Source and Nursery of the Monks. A young Novice may be compared to a Child who at fourteen or fifteen Years of Age has a Vow imposed upon him, to be tormented in his Convent by all the Passions of this World. His wearing an odd Habit, his having his Head shaved, and his Feet bare, makes him never the less a Man. In spite of the Monkish Education, and the Prejudices which are imbib'd in the Cloister, Reason sooner or later speaks out clearly, and breaks through the Clouds which obscured it; so that at thirty Years of Age we reflect

on the Folly committed at fifteen; but the Impossibility of repairing it is attended with such Anguish as turns afterwards into Hypocrisy and Debauchery. Man, born for Liberty, cannot always be a Slave, but sooner or later endcavours to throw off so harsh a Captivity. You are not near so happy, said I to the Friar, as I imagined: I plainly see that your Condition is only tranquil in Appearance. If you knew it thoroughly, replied he, you would find it a State full of Anxiety: 'Tis true that our Life is an entire Series of Clownishness and Sluggishness, and so tranquil, that a brute Beast cou'd relish it. If we could cease to be Men, and to have Passions, nothing certainly is so commodious as to eat, drink, and sleep. For as to the pretended Austerities of which we make a shew to the World, these are things to which we are easily accusom'd. Habit inures us to bear our Feet as naked as the Face and Hands: The want of Linen is a thing which is not minded, when a Man has been a Week without it; and there is not a Friar but is as easy in his Habit, after he has been three Months admitted, as a Beau in his laced Clothes. But it is impossible ever to be reconciled to that servile Obedience, which ranks us in the Class of Beasts, at the same time that it leaves us the Passions and Sentiments of Men; which forbids us even the Liberty of Thinking, and which renders it criminal for us to have a Glimpse of that Reason which offers to give us Light.

This Friar was going on to give me a farther Account of his Situation, when I heard the same Bell ring which had before call'd him to the Refectory. Now said he, 'tis time for me to return to my Cell, and the Hour is come for my going to Bed. As fond as I am of sitting up and enjoying your good Company, I am forced to leave  
you :

you: The Guardian in half an Hour's Time will go to the Chambers to see that all are a-bed; and as he has ow'd me a grudge for a long Time, would be very glad to find a Pretence to abridge me of my Mefs for a whole Week. The Friar had this so much at Heart, that without staying for any Answer, he kiss'd his Habit and left us.

Of all the Whimsies of the *Nazarenes*, nothing appears to me so ridiculous as this vast Swarm of People, who are tormented in their Solitude, and a Burthen to those without Doors. That State of Life which is least useful to Society, is the most contemptible of all; but that which is pernicious and noxious to Society, must be held in Abhorrence by Men of Sense. Where is the Policy of *France* to keep near an Hundred thousand Drones, that are of no manner of Service to the Arts and Sciences, and the Preservation of the Kingdom?

The superstitious *Nazarenes* pretend that there should be an Order of Men in all Countries, to pray perpetually for those that cannot do it themselves. They set an infinite Value upon Monastical Psalmody, and think the Safety of the State depends upon it: Ignorant Wretches! who do not know that the best Song that can be address'd to God, consists in the Purity of the Heart. They might easily cure themselves of their Prejudices, if they were to cast their Eyes into certain *Nazarene* Countries, from whence the Monks have been entirely banish'd: They would there see that the Deity is so far from being offended at the Banishment and Proscription of those Drones, that he has bless'd those Kingdoms with Wealth and Plenty. Consider, dear *Isaac*, how many Children all these Monks would have, if one was a Shoemaker, another a Taylor, another a Baker, &c. Now the same Arret that suppress'd the Monasteries

nafteries, wou'd alfo break open the Prifons of Numbers of young Women; and in fifteen Years Time the Kingdom wou'd be more populous by one third. The *French* who make ufe of their Reason, know the Abufe of Convents and Monafteries, but they have a Veneration for it as an Error of Antiquity, confecrated under the Veil of Religion, kept up by the Superftitious, and protected by the fovereign Pontiff. The feveral Monaftic Orders are as fo many different Regiments under his Command, which keep Garrifon in the *Nazarene* Countries that are of his Faith. By the Affiftance of thefe Forces, which have their feveral Liveries, their Colonels, their Captains, and even their Colours or Banners, he has often fhook the Thrones of the moft powerful Monarchs, and flabb'd them to the Heart in the midft of their Courts and Armies.

The *English* and *Dutch* could never totally proferibe or banifh the Monks from their Countries, but they have forbid them to appear there in their military Habits, fo that they drefs there like other Men. But in the Toleration which they grant to the Soldiers of the fovereign Pontiff, they have excepted the \* Grenadiers, who are bold refolute People, and ready to undertake any thing for the Accomplifhment of their Defigns. Thefe look on the other Monks with Contempt, and pretend not to be of their Clafs. Nevertheless, they are not merely Ecclefiastics, and their Eftablifhment and Politics are equally difficult to define and discover. They are as learned, as the other Friars are ignorant; feeble Friends, but implacable Enemies; fevere in their Manners, and very regular in their Ways of Living, whatever their Adverfaries fay of 'em; but relax as to other Points, and com-

\* The Jefuits.

plaisant even to excess. Their Morality is a Consequence of their Policy, as their reserv'd Conduct is of that good Order and Rule which are injoin'd by their principal Leaders. As private Men they are engaging, good-natured, and unaffected; but in the generality as a Body, they are haughty, dangerous, crafty Impostors, and ambitious beyond expression. They are not terrified at Dangers; they travel every Day to the remotest Countries to make Incursions, and to plant the *Nazarene* Standard there. They are an unshaken Bulwark to the sovereign Pontiff; so that when he is under a Necessity of undertaking any *Coup d'Eclat*, he always applies to them. For this reason they are often suspected to be the Authors of a great many Things in which they have no Share. They are of great Use to the Society, by the Care they take of the Education of the Youth, which is commonly committed to them. They pass for great Enemies to the Fair Sex, in which they differ intirely from certain Friars\*, who are deem'd the Heroes of Monastic Gallantry. 'Tis not many Days ago, that one of these was unfortunately surpris'd with a Fair Penitent of his, whom he had introduced into his Convent in Man's Apparel. The Affair made a good deal of Noise at first, but the Monks endeavour'd to hush it up, and in public denied the Truth of the Fact.

The *Frenchman* who told me the Story, said by way of Banter, That it would be of Service to the State, if the Monks play'd these Pranks oftener; *They wou'd make France populous*, said he, *and would be no longer such a Charge upon the Public.* God forbid, said another *Frenchman*, *that the Race of so pernicious a Breed should ever multiply: We should then see Monsters to the third Generation: The Father a Drone; the Son a Rascal; and guess what*

\* The Cordeliers.

would.

would be the Grandson. By this thou may'st judge what Opinion some of the *Nazarenes* have of their Friars.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live content, with a full Measure of Happiness.



## L E T T E R XLIII.

*From* AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Rabbi, at Constanti-  
nople.

SOME Time ago, dear *Isaac*, I gave thee my Opinion concerning the Notion that all People are damn'd, who have not the good Fortune to be born within the Pale of *Israel*\*. I confess'd to thee that I cou'd not believe that an infinite Number of good People, who have in their Religion conform'd to the Precepts of the soundest Morality, who have obey'd the internal Legislator, that is to say, the Dictates of their Conscience, and the Impressions of natural Reason, cou'd be damn'd. I founded my Opinion on the Goodness and Justice of God, to the very Essence of which Attributes the everlasting Misery of innocent Creatures is directly contrary. I frankly declare to thee, that upon this Goodness, and this same Justice, I would gladly establish a second Principle, *viz.* that the Pains of the Damn'd will not be eternal; and that after a certain Number of Ages, the Souls condemn'd to the Torments of the Damn'd, will be cleans'd and purify'd from their Stains, by the Pains which they have endured.

\* LETTER XXXVI.

How

How can it be conceiv'd that God should condemn Millions of Creatures to everlasting Misery? For by admitting that Man, who had the Free-Will of committing Good or Evil, has given Occasion to the Deity to punish him eternally, and that Justice being a Quality as essential to the Supreme Being as Goodness, the everlasting Punishment of the Damn'd were a just Punishment, it does not clear up the Difficulty in question, because God having it at his Option to purge Men from their Transgressions by temporary Pains, it is to be presupposed that he ought to choose the latter. 'The Notion which I have of Clemency (a Notion which I could not be mistaken in entertaining, because 'tis conformable to the Light of Nature, and comes to me from God) evidently convincing me that it is unjust, when it is possible to put an End to the Torments of an unhappy Person, to prolong them eternally without a lawful Cause. Now there is none at all for the rendering Damnation eternal. I would fain ask the *Jewish, Nazarene, and Mahometan* Doctors, who are alike positive in the Point of the eternal Misery of Creatures, whether God could not, if he thought fit, order it so that the Pains which Souls suffer after the Destruction of the Body, should render them pure and worthy to come into his Presence. There is no Divine, I believe, of any Religion whatsoever, that will dare to make answer, that the Almighty cannot blot out the Stains of a Soul, be they ever so deep. Let such a one be who or what he will, he must be deem'd either an Atheist, who sets Limits to the Power of the Deity, and who by consequence would gladly annihilate it; or an Idiot, who has not the least Notion either of sound Philosophy, or even of the general Ideas of Order. Now putting the Case that the Punishment which a Man suffers, tho' ever so

much

much deserv'd, does not render him a jot the more virtuous; and that at the same time it is in the Power of another to inflict lesser Penance upon him, which shall restore him to his Innocence, and give him a Hatred of Vice; I would know of the Divines, what ought to be done in such a Case, and what would be the Dictate of Clemency? Every Man in his Senses cannot help confessing, that the latter Method ought to be preferr'd. Now since it is in the Power of God to put an End to the Pains of the Damn'd, and since he can render those Pains useful and advantageous to them, why shou'd any body think that he renders them everlasting and unavailable, and that he should do Ill, when it is in his Power to do Good? Is it not an Absurdity to maintain and believe, that sovereign Justice can be for Injustice?

*But, some will say, you judge of the Attributes of the infinite Being, by those of finite Creatures. You are for diving to the very Bottom of God's Clemency, and can have no Idea of it.* This Objection is false, and is the very Basis and Foundation of all the Absurdities of the Schools. For I grant that I can have no intire and perfect Idea of the celestial Clemency. But the Notion I have of it is not a wrong and fallacious one, because it is agreeable to Reason, which being the only Light that the Divinity has granted for my Conduct, cannot mislead me. If Things which pass with Men for the most just and equitable, are unjust in the Sight of God, there is an End of all Certainty, and all is Confusion. What will be deem'd Virtue, may be Vice; we shall entertain no Notion suitable to the Attributes of the supreme Being, and it must be said that we have no Idea of him consistent with those which we are furnish'd with by the Light of Nature. For as soon as it is granted that the same Notions which I entertain



certain of Goodness and Clemency, may be ascribed to the Goodness and Clemency of Heaven, I shall from thence therefore plainly conclude, that nothing whatsoever, repugnant to those Ideas, can have Existence in the Attributes of God. Now I am clearly convinced, that it is contrary to the invisible Wisdom to inflict everlasting and unavailing Punishments, when they may be render'd short and useful. Surely therefore, God, in whose Power it was to render the Torments of the Damn'd useful and temporary, could not choose to render them everlasting and useless, because God, being sovereignly Wise, always acts conformably to Wisdom.

Our sacred Books assure us, dear *Isaac*, in several Places, that God will not always chide, nor will he keep his Anger for ever \*. Why therefore should Cruelty be ascribed to him, which is a Principle directly contrary to his Essence? If any Expressions in Scripture seem to favour the Notion of everlasting Damnation, it is where a Meaning is put upon them which they do not carry, and where they are not interpreted as they ought. Into what Absurdities should we not fall, were we to explain all the Passages of the Bible literally?

The *Nazarene* Doctors, who establish their Opinion of everlasting Punishment upon the precise Terms of their sacred Books, have no better Foundation for it than our Rabbies have; for they own that sometimes the literal Sense of certain Expressions must not be adhered to. Why then don't they interpret those Words of *everlasting Fire*, and *endless Torments*, in such a manner as does not hurt the Idea we have of the Divine Mercy? To this they answer, That the Justice of God is an Attribute

\* See Psal. ciii. Isaiah lvii. Micah vii.

which is as essential to his Being as his Mercy, and that his Justice demands the Punishment of Faults. But this Answer is another Evasion: For as his Justice is capable of being satisfied by a temporary Punishment, it ought not to demand an everlasting one. And the Question again recurs to this Point, *viz.* Whether it was not in the Power of God, that the most enormous Sins should be expiated by temporary Torments? Undoubtedly he that is Almighty had it in his Power; and therefore he has so ordered it, because he always does what is best, most charitable, most mild, most merciful; and because it is more agreeable to Clemency and Mercy, to inflict temporary Punishments, than such as never should have an End.

There is a Difficulty that occurs to the Mind in favour of the rigid Divines, *viz.* the future State of the Devils: If the Pains of the Damn'd are transitory, it will follow that those of the Devils must be so too. This seems at first Sight contrary to our most familiar Ideas. But when we consider the Matter attentively, and lay aside all Prejudice, the Delusion soon vanishes; and there is nothing impossible, or even contrary to Reason, in the Supposition that there will be an End even to the Torments of the Devils. Besides, we don't know the Nature of those Spirits; we are not sure that they do all that Mischiefs to Mankind which is pretended. Who knows too, whether they are not forc'd to do it, and whether God does not make use of them as his Instruments to punish Vice? In such case, the Evils which they commit ought not to be charged upon them as Crimes, since the Angels themselves have sometimes been the Ministers of the Wrath of Heaven. A Devil, who acts by the Order of the Deity, is no more criminal than the destroying Angel, and therefore is only punishable for his first Offence.

Where's.

Where's the Impossibility but God may one Day forgive him for it, and that it may be effac'd by Punishment and Repentance? A Man would be very silly to affirm upon the Faith of the Stories, which are related by the *Nazarene* Monks in the History of their Exorcisms, that the Devils blaspheme the Divinity. 'Tis to be presupposed that they act very differently, as well as the Damn'd, and that both the one and the other being Spirits disengag'd from the Shackles of the Body, and shelter'd from the Delusions of the Senses, they know that the Wrath of God, how great soever, may be turn'd by Repentance; and undoubtedly they are the better for this Knowledge. That Rage they are said to be possessed with in the Books of the *Nazarenes*, is an Anguish of Mind that torments the Damn'd from a hearty Sorrow that they have displeased the Divinity: And this Sorrow is a Homage they pay to him, which serves as a Preparation for their future State, purges their Faults, cleanses their Stains, and, after some time of Suffering, renders them worthy of the Mercy of God.

The State of Purgatory, which many religious Sects have adopted as a Truth, is an evident Proof of the Opinion of its Professors, that by Sufferings a guilty Soul may be made fit to behold its Creator. 'Tis true that the *Nazarene* Papists have publish'd so many Absurdities on this Article of a Place of Atonement, that their Adversaries have had Reason to treat all their Stories as Impostures, invented for no other End than to satisfy the Avarice of the Priests: But if they had barely contented themselves with admitting of a Place to which all Souls in general were to descend after Death, there to remain till they were purify'd, their Opinion would, I think, have been very rational; *1<sup>st</sup>*, Because the Opinion which  
does

does not admit of everlasting Punishment, seems to me to be perfectly agreeable to the Ideas which the Light of Nature conveys to me of the Clemency of God: 2dly, Because if we distinguish the Souls in the Life to come into two Classes only, 'tis as much as to say that all Souls when they go out of the Body, are either perfectly pure, or all over defiled. Nevertheless it is visible, that this is evidently false. The Mercy of God therefore requires that, in order to favour the Happiness of Souls, there should be some Method to cleanse those who had been more addicted to Evil than Good. Now, by admitting one general Residence for all, in which they might be purg'd of their Crimes, it abolishes the Purgatory of the Papists, a middle State between Hell and Heaven, invented by the Craft of the Monks; and the Inconveniences are obviated, which appear in the System of those who only admit of two Classes in the Life to come.

The Doctors who maintain the Eternity of Torments object, that the Opinion that they will have an End, inclines Men to be loose, and authorizes Crimes by giving Encouragement to those who commit them. *Do but once persuade the People, say they, that the greatest Offences will be one Day pardon'd, and you set open the Bar to Licentiousness of Manners, to Dishonesty, to Murder, Massacre, &c.*

‘ Since our Torments, the Wicked will think, are  
 ‘ not to last for ever, let us balance the Pleasures  
 ‘ we shall have a Taste of upon Earth, with the  
 ‘ transitory Torments we are to suffer in the other  
 ‘ World; which, be they ever so severe, ought  
 ‘ not to frighten us, since we are sure that they will  
 ‘ end in a happy Eternity.’ The Difference, *continue the Divines*, between the Virtuous and the Wicked is so small, that it can scarce make any Impression

pression upon the latter ; for supposing thirty thousand Years of Pains and Torments, what is it to immense Eternity ? A Drop of Water compared to the Ocean, gives but a faint Idea of that unhappy Period, compared to happy Eternity.

'Tis certain, dear *Isaac*, that there is a Plausibility in these Arguments, yet when they are scann'd thoroughly, they lose a vast deal of their Weight ; and 'tis visible that they have more of the Specious than the Solid. The more conformable the threatened Punishment is to the Ideas of Mankind, the more Impression it makes upon their Minds. Now 'tis very certain, that there being something in everlasting Torments, not only contrary to the Goodness of God, but even to the Notions of the meanest of Mankind, most of the Rakes, Debauchees, and Wits of the World, totally reject the Belief of a Hell, because they see no Proportion between temporary Faults and eternal Punishments. As Religion does not furnish a just middle Opinion to shew a Connection between the two former, they run into an Extreme, and not only disbelieve mortal Punishments, but even momentary ones. Every Day's Experience demonstrates this Truth so clearly, that all the philosophical Discourses in the World cannot defeat it. Don't we see a vast Number of stupid People, whose Contempt of Hell is not owing to their Study, excessively indifferent about it for no other Reason but their faint Opinion of its Existence ?

'Tis a Mistake to think that Men who are persuaded of the Reality of certain Pains, which, tho' they are extremely severe and cruel, are to have an End, will not endeavour to escape them. For, as they are convinc'd of the Reality of such Pains, and as it carries nothing in it contrary to their own  
Notions,

Notions, they are struck with it to the last Degree. One need only consider how many Alms the *Nazarenes* of the several Sects have given to their Priests, and how many Fasts, Pilgrimages, &c. they observe, to be fully convinced of what Effect the Notion of temporary Punishment has upon the Minds of the greatest Criminals. We need only cast our Eyes on what passes at *Rome* during the Jubilee. There are few of the Banditti or Robbers of *Italy*, but are for gaining Indulgences for two or three thousand Years: They don't think of avoiding Hell, but all they care for is to shorten the Time of their future Residence in Purgatory.

I conclude my Letter, dear *Isaac*, with this Reflection: All Mankind will necessarily agree in admitting the Opinion of such Punishments as are conformable to all Men's Notions; by consequence their Fear will tend to the Good of Society. The Ungodly, the Libertines, and the Wits will have no Argument to combat a Belief that is founded upon the Ideas of the Light of Nature: They will not dare to flatter themselves with the Impunity of their Crimes on any pretence whatsoever: They can then no longer say, *The Punishments with which you threaten us, are inconsistent with the Goodness of God: We don't comprehend that a Fault, be it ever so great, can never be expiated: The Hell of which you assure us the Existence, is repugnant to our Notions.* When they are fully possess'd of the Truth of an Opinion consistent with the Ideas of Order, they will be sensible that their Crimes will be severely chastiz'd, and that their Punishments will be proportionable to their Faults. Then, in order to avoid this temporary Hell, they will do every thing that the *Greek and Roman Nazarenes* do to free themselves from Purgatory; and  
when

when they really believe its Existence, they will be the more struck with it.

Fare thee well, my dear *Isaac*; endeavour to live content and happy; and let me hear from thee.



## LETTER XLIV.

*From ISAAC ONIS, a Rabbi, at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA at Paris.*

I Have been so much employ'd, that I have not been able to answer thy Letters sooner. A considerable Number of us Rabbies and \* Caraites have had a Meeting, to try if we could bring about an Union of our Opinions; but after having disputed to no purpose, we separated.

I confess to thee, dear *Monceca*, that for my own part I have been almost convinced by those Conferences, that the Caraites have a good Cause; I did what I could to prevail with my Brethren to give up certain Opinions, but they rigidly pleaded for the Validity and Truth of the Talmud. I could not help blushing when the Caraites asked us, *If we could in reason oblige them to believe, that God is forced to roar like a Lion three times in a Night; the first time when the Ass brays, the second when the Dogs bark, and the third time when the Infant sucks at the*

\* *Caraites*, a Sect of Modern Jews, in opposition to the Rabbinical Class, or those who admit the Talmud of the Rabbies. The Term *Carai* signifies, a *Man of consummate Knowledge in the Holy Scriptures*; for which Reason they whose Faith is only founded on the Bibles are called *Caraites*.

*Breast, and when the Woman talks to her Husband? God then says, Wo be to me, because I have destroy'd my House, burnt my Temple, and made my Children Captives* \*. ‘ This, said the Caraites, is a Sample  
 ‘ of that Confession of Faith, which you want us to  
 ‘ sign, by adopting the ridiculous Errors of the  
 ‘ Talmud. But we find that they who have such  
 ‘ Notions of God, can neither serve nor worship  
 ‘ him. What Honour does a Being deserve, that is  
 ‘ liable to all kinds of Folly, obliged to bray and to be  
 ‘ in a Rage, subject to all the Passions, to Hatred,  
 ‘ Despair and Repentance, and so short-sighted as  
 ‘ not to have foreseen that by abandoning his People,  
 ‘ he would be guilty of a Fault which he would  
 ‘ repent of for a long time.’

‘Twas in vain for our Rabbies to think of convincing their Adversaries by the Sentiments of the Rabbies, and by the great Number of *Jews* that adhere to the Talmud; *We have no other Writings*, reply'd the Caraites, *for the Rule of our Faith, than the twenty-four Books of the Bible* †; *which you own as well as we, were written by Persons whom God had inspired. We are therefore justifiable in rejecting all human Traditions which are contrary thereunto. What can human Sentiments avail against the Command of God, who is unchangeable, and not liable to Passions? Whereas, were he such as the Talmud,*

\* Heidan *de Origine Erroris*, p. 255.

† The Author of the Caraites Commentary, which goes by the Name of *Aaron's*, the Son of *Joseph*, who lived in the Close of the XIIIth Century, and whose Work is preserved in MS. in the Library of the Fathers of the Oratory at *Paris*, whither it was brought from *Constantinople*, approves of all the Books of the Bible which are in the *Jewish* Canon, and reckons up twenty-four of them, as others do:



*and the Writings of the Rabbies represent him, the Creator would be more vile, and more to be pity'd than the Creature.*

I know not how it happens, dear *Monceca*, that our Brethren are so infatuated with a Number of Notions, that are so inconsistent with the Idea which we ought to have of the Almighty. That Medley of Chimæras and Superstitions, which we have added to the written Law, is astonishing to a Man of Sense, and renders him shy of certain Ceremonies, which would be more reasonable if they were not so numerous. Superstitions are the same thing to Religion, as useless Suckers are to Trees, which, by wasting the Spirit and Juice, leave the Trunk sapless, and hinder it from bearing Fruit. In the several Systems of Faith that are in the World, 'tis easy to perceive, that those which are most incumber'd with superstitious Ceremonies, are least put in practice as to the Essentials. A Jew breaks the Commandments of God ten times a Day, without regarding what he does, and seems to mind nothing but the Ceremonies and Customs of the *Sabbath-Day*. A Man will be guilty of a Robbery or Adultery, who would scruple to cut his Bread with the Knife of a *Nazarene*. If these Customs were commanded in the Law, they might be justify'd, did they appear ever so ridiculous; but since they have nothing for their Foundation, but the chimærical Visions of some of our Elders, I own to thee, that I can only approve of those People, who making use of the Reason which God has given them for their Guide, are for adhering precisely to what they find written in our sacred Books. And since I take thee for my Friend, whom I can trust with my most secret Thoughts, I must tell thee, that I have resolved to embrace the Sentiments of the *Caraites*, and to quit those of the *Rabbinists* entirely. I am

sensible that my Alteration of Sentiments will make a surprizing Noise, that our Synagogues will grumble at it, and that, as I am one of the senior Rabbies, my Proceeding may be attended with Consequences which tend to open the Eyes of many others; but worldly Interests ought not to hinder us from adhering to the Truth as soon as we perceive it. To give the less Occasion for speaking of my Change, I have actually purposed a Voyage to *Egypt*; I am going to settle at *Cairo*, where I shall live with my new Brethren, the pure *Jews*, and the only true Observers of the Law of *Moses* \*. As thou might'st be apt to think, that I have adopted this new Opinion, without having well examin'd it, I will give thee the particular Reasons which determin'd me to it.

Our Rabbies say, that neither the two Tables, nor even the Pentateuch, contain every thing that was enjoin'd to *Moses* upon the Mountain. They say, 'tis evident, that if God had had nothing to dictate but the written Law, an Hour only would have been sufficient for it, or at most five or six. They conclude, that he gave it to *Moses* in the Day-time, and that he explain'd it to him in the Night. 'Tis this Explanation that they call the *Oral Law*, which *Moses* taught to *Joshua* his Successor, and *Joshua* to the Seventy Elders, who transmitted it thus commented to their Posterity, and even to the last of the Prophets, from whom the great Sanhedrin received it †. From that Time

\* At *Cairo*, *Constantinople*, and even in *Muscovy*, there are several *Caraites*, who have their separate Synagogues, and think themselves the only true *Jews*.

† The grand Sanhedrin was the chief Tribunal of the *Jews*, which was held at *Jerusalem*. The Term is taken from the Greek Συνοδον, which signifies *confessus*, i. e. an Assembly of Men sitting.

the

the Fathers have transmitted it to their Children; which is the Practice at this Day, and serves for a Rule when the written Law is mute.

Without stopping, dear *Monceca*, to examine the Foundation for the Rabbies Opinion that God dictated the Law in the Day-time, and explain'd it in the Night, because there is nothing of it in the Bible; and admitting, for the sake of shortning the Dispute, that *Moses* receiv'd several Ordinances from the Mouth of the Almighty, yet I can never think that he spent so many Days in prescribing the ridiculous Ceremonies and odd Whimsies of the Talmud. And if I admit that God commanded several Things to *Moses*, which that Prophet did not set down in Writing, and which are preserved by Tradition, I maintain on the other hand, that every thing which is absurd and ridiculous in the said Tradition, has been added to it in process of Time; and that every Age having augmented it with some Error, the Talmud is become the Summary of that pretended Tradition.

If thou dost but consider, dear *Monceca*, after what manner that monstrous Work was composed, compiled and brought to Perfection, thou wilt see Error, Absurdities and Lyes abound more and more in it, the farther it comes down from the Time in which the written Law was given. About the 188th Year of the *Nazarenes*, Rabbi *Judah Hakadosh* compiled the Writings of the High-Priest call'd *Misna*, and that was the first Original of the Talmud. Tho' there are many Faults to be found with it, yet that Work is very far from being as bad as the second Collection\*, written in 469 by Rabbi *Jochanam*, and some other *Hebrews*.

\* The Talmud of *Jerusalem*, so called because it was made in that City.

who were his Assistants. Finally, in 476 *Asa* and *Hammai*, Rabbies of *Babylon*, added new Visions to this Book, and put it in the Condition in which we now see it\*, some ridiculous Errors excepted, which the Rabbi *Meir* added about the Year 546, to the Impertinencies of *Asa* his Father, whose Memoirs were all in his Possession.

I therefore appeal to thy own Conscience, dear *Monceca*, whether thou dost think that the Authority of such a Work, which the older it is proves the fuller of Errors, and which deviates in all Points from the primitive Simplicity of our Religion, ought to influence my Heart more than the Writings of *Moses* and the antient Prophets, and more than my natural Reason, which plainly demonstrates to me that the Talmud is nothing but a Heap of Impostures, Chimæras and Blasphemies? Where is the Man, I do not say that is learned, but that is ever so silly, who has not an infinite Contempt for a Book which says, that *God commanded a Sacrifice to atone for his own Faults*? What, is God a Sinner! Is God subject to Vice! In that Case he cannot be perfect: Is he not therefore liable to all the Misfortunes of the human Nature? How durst he punish a Crime, when 'tis he himself commits it? I tremble, dear *Monceca*, when I transcribe these Blasphemies; 'tis with Reluctance that my Hand commits them to Paper. I had not duly examined my Religion hitherto; I was in an Error owing to my Prejudices and to my Neglect. The Dispute of the Caraites has cast a Beam of Light into my Soul, which has open'd my Eyes to see the dreadful Mistakes into which I was plung'd. As soon as I perceiv'd Reason to be on the side of my Adversaries, I did not recur to So-

\* The Talmud of *Babylon*.

phistry to prevent me from being enlighten'd. I honestly confess'd my Error, and my Humility was of service to pluck me out of that Abyfs, in which my Brethren the Rabbies continue plung'd.

Endeavour to imitate my Example; abandon thy Prejudices, my dear *Aaron*; make use of thy Reason to combat them; and consider that if there is a God, he cannot be such as the Talmud represents him to us. No body is more convinc'd than thou art of the absolute Necessity of the Existence of a Being, sovereignly perfect. Embrace therefore the Sentiment of the Caraites, who don't injure the Divine Being. I fear that in the Country were thou art, thou hast been accustomed to lean too much to pretended Tradition; which is the strong Hold of the *Nazarene* Papists, and the very Rampart of their Errors. But consider that even among them there's a sort of Caraites, who have refined their Reason, and reduced it to its primitive Establishment. Do thou make use of their Arguments to reject a Tradition which is not conformable to the Text.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and live happy and content.



## L E T T E R XLV.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
JACOB BRITO, at Turin.*

Dear JACOB,

THY Letters relating to the *Genoesse* and *Piedmontese*, gave me great Pleasure: I envy thy Condition, and don't think my Life so happy as a

Traveller's. He sees new Objects continually which both divert and instruct him; he cultivates his Understanding without making a Toil of it, and studies in the great Volume of the World, the only Book in which we can learn to know Men. Let a Man's Genius be what it will, one can attain but to a superficial Knowledge of the Manners of Nations by a Library; for in the exactest Relations there are, I warrant, twenty Anecdotes omitted which give the Character of a People, and which cannot be perceiv'd but by living with them. To this add the Contradiction there is in most of the Journals of Travellers, and the Partiality with which they are written.

The antient Philosophers were for most part great Travellers: *Plato* went to hear *Euclid* at *Megara*, and *Theodore* the Mathematician at *Cyrene*: He travell'd into *Egypt*, to converse there with the Priests; and 'tis even said, that in that very Country he learn'd our Religion. This however is true, that he speaks of God with much more Dignity than the other Pagan Philosophers. Nevertheless he maintain'd some Errors, which set him at a vast Distance from the Principles of our Holy Law. He held that there was but one Almighty God, the sovereign Maker of all Things; but he admitted of a Croud of subaltern Gods and Demi-Gods, subject indeed to the former, but partaking his Divinity\*. 'Tis to no purpose to see if there's any thing in such Doctrine that resembles *Judaism*, for the Unity of God is the Basis of our Faith.

\* *Plato*, both in his *Timæus* and his *de Legibus* says, that the World is a God, as are also Heaven, Earth, and the Mind, and all those whom we receive by Instruction from our Ancestors. *Cic. de Nat. Deorum*, lib. i. cap. 12.

The primitive *Nazarenes* were for the most part of this Philosopher's Sect; and they fancied that they saw all the Mysteries of their Religion in his Writings. One of their Priests affirms that *Plato's* Books were of very great Service in explaining a great many Truths of the *Nazarene* Faith to him \*. Two others of their Doctors pretend, that he knew one of their most secret Mysteries †. And the primitive *Nazarenes* had almost recognized him for one of their Saints. At a Time when Men were fond of particular Sects, they were under such a Necessity of supporting their Opinions with the Authority of some eminent Philosopher, that they were obliged to adopt the Writings of *Plato*, as what were most agreeable to *Judaism* and *Nazarenism*. Most of them were so well convince'd of the pretended Faith which they ascrib'd to this Philosopher, that near 796 Years after the Establishment of their Religion, they were for granting him the Spirit of Prophecy. In the Reign of *Constantine VI*, and *Irene* his Mother, a very antient Sepulchre was open'd with a dead Body in it, which was affirm'd to be *Plato's*: It had a Plate of Gold about the Neck, and this Inscription on it; *Christ shall be born of a Virgin: I believe in him, and thou shalt see me once more in the Days of Irene*

\* I shew'd him (*Simplicianus*) the Course of my Error; and when I mention'd that I had read some Books of the *Platonists*, which were translated into the *Latin* Tongue by *Victorinus*, heretofore Rhetorician at *Rome*, who I had heard died a Christian, he congratulated me that I had not been deceiv'd by the Writings of other Philosophers full of Fallacy and Delusion, with respect to the Elements of this World. *Augustin. Confess. lib. viii. cap. 2.*

† *Justin Martyr*, and *Clement of Alexandria*.

and Constantine †. I would have been easy for Men, free of their Prejudices, to see that both the Plate and the Inscription on it, were as modern as the Tomb was antient. But the *Nazarene* Doctors, fond of Miracles, adopted that, or at least endeavour'd to render it probable; and a certain Friar, surnam'd the *Angel of the School*, besides some other Writers \*, and not long ago a certain Jesuit †, have made a great many very trifling Reflections upon this Inscription.

I can't conceive, dear *Brito*, what the *Nazarenes* mean by offering to rest the Truth of their Religion upon such Fables. Such Absurdities were enough to discredit the Truth: I am the more surprized that they should give ear unto such Oddities, because they have no need of all those pious Impositions. For in short (as I may speak my Mind freely to thee) there are few Religions which have such strong Proofs as those of the *Nazarene* People.

I have had several Disputes with some Men of Learning, and was astonish'd at certain Things, of which they in a manner convinc'd me. It must be own'd that if the Prophecies have not been really fulfill'd, they have been so near being accomplish'd, that whoever will examine them, will find our Sentiments very difficult to be defended. The *Nazarenes* say, we have no way left to come off, but by having recourse to the Etymology and Signification of some Words. They say, that since the Text is clearly against us, we endeavour to

† This Passage is reported by *Zonaras*, a Greek Historian, from whence 'twas translated into *Latin* by *Jerome Wolfius*, and printed at *Basil* in 1557. See his Tome iii.

\* *Paul* the Deacon, lib. xxiii. *Sigebert*. *Genebrard*; lib. iii.

† *Canisius de Beata Virgine*, lib. ii.



puzzle it, by ridiculous Glosses and forc'd Explanations of certain Expressions. I am sometimes oblig'd to own these Facts; but then I retreat to our Tradition: I make use of the same Arguments and the same Weapons which they make use of against Adversaries, even in their own Religion. They cannot refuse me a Point from which they themselves reap so much Advantage, and to which they grant such Authority. Consequently I make use of our Tradition as an invincible Rampart: I oppose the Authority of the Rabbies to that of the Priests, and the Talmud to the Books of their chief Doctors; and if I don't clear up the Dispute, I am at least sure of spinning it out to Eternity.

I own to thee that I should be very much gravell'd, if the *Nazarene* Papists made the same Objection to me as the *Nazarene* Protestants form against them; and if they should confine me to the Text of Scripture, and to the Evidence of Natural Reason. This way of disputing is terrible and hinders all Subterfuges. 'Tis not possible to make use of any of those Quirks, which are so useful for evading the Ground of the Question. The only Remedy that can be had, is to cavil at certain Expressions, and to give an advantageous or a disadvantageous Turn to certain Passages; and I own that by this means Disputes may be carried on for Ages, and a Number of Volumes in Folio may be spun out, by the learned Men of the several Parties. But in Disputes of this kind, whoever will examine them without Prejudice, judges more easily of the Question in Debate, than when there is a Necessity of reconciling the various Authorities of a Number of Writers, and the Validity of two different Traditions.

The *Nazarenes* in general are fond to support their Arguments by Miracles and Prodiges: A surprizing

prizing Event, be it ever so whimsical, gives them as much Delight as Geometrical Evidence. There is no Matter, no Subject, in which they don't think Heaven interposes. Do they win a Battle; 'tis not to their Valour that they are obliged for it; 'tis to St. *George* and St. *Victor*; who quitting the celestial Mansions, came to fight at the head of their Squadrons, and amuse themselves with cutting off Arms and Heads\*. A dismal Employment, in my Opinion, for People that are in their Senses; much more so for Saints. Thou wilt perhaps imagine that such as they come to help are therefore good People: Quite otherwise. Those were infamous Robbers, who under the Veil of Religion, and the Pretext of a Holy War, committed all sorts of Outrage, Murder and Rapine. The *Nazarenes* own these Facts, and to those Crimes they impute the Miscarriage of that Enterprize. One *Bernard*, who had preach'd throughout *Europe* for the Execution of that Enterprize, and who prophesied mighty Matters that would ensue from it, was the first Dupe to the ill Success of that Holy War. To salve his Reputation, he had no Remedy but to charge it upon the Crimes of those who undertook it. A merry Way of prophesying this; to foretel what will never happen, and not to say one Word of what will actually come to pass.

As mortified as the *Nazarenes* may well be, to think of the chimerical Notions with which they have been so often infatuated, yet if to-morrow any two Friars of Reputation were to begin their Preachments again, there would be Multitudes enough to undertake the Pious Journey, in order

\* Battle of *Iconium*, won at the time of the *Croisades*. *Maimbourg's Hist. of the Croisades, lib. v.*

to commit all manner of Crimes in *Palestine*, and sacrifice Men to the God of Peace, to whom Murder and the shedding of human Blood is so odious.

The *Nazarenes* are all agreed in this Principle, and their Church even values it self for its Abhorrence of Homicide. One would therefore take it to be a necessary Consequence of this Truth, that they should only desire to influence and enlighten Mankind by Good-Nature and Reason. But it seems that they have a constant Maxim, to think one way, and to act another. Nothing is more mild, more pathetic than their Discourses, nothing so harsh, so outrageous and violent as their Conduct; and what is still more surprizing, is, that they think to colour the Iniquity of their Actions by some specious external Appearances. When the Inquisition orders a *Jew* to the Stake in *Portugal*, they make him a very polite Compliment, and assure him that they are very sorry they are going to deliver him up to Execution; and as it wou'd not be suitable for them to pass the Sentence of Death, they cause it to be read by a Lay-Judge.

All these ridiculous Cruelties put me in mind of a pleasant Expedient thought of by *Turpin*, the Archbishop in the time of *Charlemain*. For the dispatching of some *Saracens* and other Adversaries of his as Occasion presented, he made use of no Sword, but he had a Club like that of *Hercules*, with which he episcopally knock'd them on the head \*. There has been a Time when it was counted as a Favour for a Man to be only committed to the Gallies, in order to enlighten his Mind: Let us leave such pernicious Methods to Error, and never use any Means to persuade but Mildness and Reason, even tho' we should have the same Power as the *Nazarenes*.

\* *Boyardo and Ariosto.*

They talk perpetually of the vast Extent of their Religion, and of the Numbers of Profelytes that they make every day; but they don't perceive that they only make Slaves of their Converts instead of true Children. The *Spaniards* thought they acted piously when they forc'd a prodigious Number of *Indians* to bend their Knees to the Image of a Saint, and to consent to their being admitted into Communion with the *Nazarenes*, till they cou'd escape the Hands of their Executioners, and fly to their antient Countrymen.

Tyranny in Religion gives a Philosopher the strongest Prejudice to it. The God of Peace cannot chuse a Worship which sheds human Blood at the Altars. The pious Cruelty of the *Spaniards* sacrificed more *Mexicans* in one Day to the Propagation of *Nazarenism*, than the Priests of *Diana* sacrificed in *Tauris* during all the Time of Paganism. What Crimes, Murders and Robberies have been committed in *Europe* for these two hundred Years on the vain Pretence of Religion! What Outrages is not the Mind of Man liable to be hurried to, when seiz'd with Superstition? The Son has been seen to stick a Dagger into the Breast of his Father, and to believe that when he peirc'd his Heart, he forc'd his Way to Heaven. Let us leave such pernicious Sentiments, dear *Brito*, to the *Nazarenes*, and be always persuaded that Violence is the last Resource of a Religion which is destitute of Truth to convince.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and let me hear from thee.



## , L E T T E R XLVI.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Rabbi, at Constanti-  
nople.*

**T**H Y Letter, dear *Isaac*, surpriz'd me not a little, and I make no doubt but thy Change of Principles astonishes all the *Jews*, and touches thy Brethren to the quick. I am assured that thou didst not determine to embrace the Opinion of the Caraites without mature Reflection \*. But I cou'd have wish'd that thy Determination had not been so quick. Many things seem clear and evident at the first or second View, which upon the third Inspection become problematical. Thou seemest in my Opinion to have too great a Contempt for the Authority of Tradition. I am sensible that it ought to submit when the Text is against it; but then, on the other hand, when the latter is obscure and seems unintelligible, it must be made use of to illustrate it. All Religions, even those which are most contrary to Tradition, do not reject it when it seems to tally with Reason and the antient Writings; which is a Point necessary to have been consider'd; nevertheless I fear that at the first Motion thou didst not give it the least Credit. It appears by thy Letter that those Instances in which thou didst find it to be contrary to Truth, made thee remiss in considering whether it was true and just in others. Be this as it will, and whatever be

\* See LETTER XLIV.

thy way of thinking, nothing can abate my Affection for thee. I lov'd thee when a Rabbiniſt, I will love thee as a Caraites; and ſhould'ſt thou turn Nazarene, my Heart wou'd follow thee to the miſt of their Temples. I will not be guilty of the Folly of the falſe Friends of our Age, who are ignorant of the Prerogatives of Friendſhip in thoſe virtuous Hearts which are united by Eſteem and Sympathy. This Band, according to them, is nothing but a ſort of Commerce, founded upon Neceſſity or Conveniency, and ſometimes even upon Pleaſure †. The Women eſpecially have ſcarce  
any

† The Friends of our Age are liable to the Reproaches which Cicero caſt upon the Epicureans, *Nam quibusdam quos audio ſapientes habitos in Græciâ, placuiſſe opinor mirabilia quædam. Sed nihil eſt quod illi non perſequantur ſuis Argutiis; partim fugiendas eſſe nimias Amicitias, ne neceſſe ſit unum ſolicitum eſſe pro pluribus; ſatis ſuperque eſſe ſuarum cuique Rerum, alienis nimis implicari moleſtum eſſe quam laxiſſimas habenas habere amicitie, quas vel adducas cum velis, vel remittas; caput enim eſſe ad beatè vivendum ſecuritatem, quâ frui non poſſit animus, ſi tanquam parturiant unus pro pluribus.* Cicero de Amicit. cap. xiii. ' Some of the  
' Greeks, ſays he, who have paſſ'd in their Country  
' for Wiſe Men, have entertain'd very odd Notions on  
' the Subject now mention'd; for there's no Extrava-  
' gance into which the Quirks of thoſe People don't  
' carry them. Some ſay, that too ſtrict Friendſhips  
' ſhould be avoided, for fear of being involv'd in the  
' Care and Trouble of others; every one having Buſi-  
' neſs enough of his own to mind, and nothing being  
' more diſagreeable than to enter too far into the  
' Concerns of others; and that the moſt convenient  
' Friendſhips are thoſe whoſe Reins are ſo looſe, that  
' they may be either lengthen'd or ſhortned at Plea-  
' ſure; ſince in order to lead a happy Life, the Secret  
' is to be free from all Care, which is not poſſible  
' when

any other Taste in their Friendships. 'Tis Pleasure that unites them, Pleasure divides them, and they are more fickle in Friendship than they are in Love.

There are twenty thousand Women at *Paris*, who have had Admirers that have left them in less than three Months, but never had more than one Lover in all their Lives. This Position may appear to thee a little extravagant, and perhaps thou wilt question whether 'tis possible, that in a City where the Women are reckon'd so gay, there shou'd be twenty thousand that never had more than one Lover. Thou would'st sooner be inclin'd to think there are twenty thousand Women who never had one Lover, than that they stuck to the first. Methinks I hear thee say, that *'tis more Virtue in a Woman to have but one Lover, than to have none at all. What Struggle has a Woman in denying herself a Pleasure that she knows nothing of?* Her Virtue has not those dangerous Ideas to grapple with, which represent certain Situations to the Mind, that are the most terrible Foes to Women that have been in Love.

I agree with thee, that my Opinion has something in it which is surprizing; but when 'tis examin'd, it seems so plausible, that one can hardly refuse to subscribe to it. The Character of Dishonesty which is fix'd on the Women, is principally owing to the Prerogative that the Men have thought fit to appropriate to themselves, of prescribing severe Rules to them almost impossible to be observ'd, and at the same time to dispense with themselves for not keeping the same. They have thought it their Right to demand of the Women, that they should be deaf to the Voice of Nature, while they indulge their  
 ' when a Man is intangled in the Affairs of others, and  
 ' when his Anxiety for them may be compar'd to the  
 ' Pains of Child-bearing.

dear,

dear selves in the Privilege of gratifying all their Desires, and of yielding to all their Inclinations. In order therefore to judge truly of the fickle Temper, which is said to be the Characteristic of the Fair Sex, things should be set upon a just Parity; and without requiring Impossibilities of 'em, it should be consider'd, Prejudice apart, whether, supposing the Women to be ever so fickle, they are not a hundred times more constant than the Men.

When the fine Gentleman breaks his Engagement with a Lady, his Conduct is justified by his Quality; he acts in Character, and no body rails at him for his Treachery. Every Mistress whom he abandons, is only an Accession to his former Triumphs. But if she offers to make a Reprisal upon her Spark for his Inconstancy; if, in order to punish him or to reclaim him by Jealousy, she tops a Rival upon him, 'tis all over with her, she is presently a false Woman, a Coquette, a Flirt, and what not. All the Tribe of Gallants condemn her without Mercy; and the very Action which redounds to the Honour of the fine Gentleman, for ever ruins the Woman who has been so unfortunate as to take a fancy to him.

A jealous, fantastical, peevish Bigot of a Husband, fancies strange Chimæras, and takes all the wild Visions with which he is disturb'd, to be Realities. The whole Society of Husbands takes his part. They pity him, but condemn his Spouse without hearing her. The whole Fair Sex is condemn'd in the Lump, by the thundering Sentence which the jealous Senate passes upon her; and from Generation to Generation, every Father breeds up his Son in his own jealous Maxims, and does not forget to quote her for an Example of conjugal Infidelity.



A Coxcomb gives himself Airs with a Woman of whom he has but a slender Knowledge. He speaks to her at Church, ogles her with his Glass at the Opera, and teazes her with his insipid Compliments in the Walks. This is sufficient to make the Public believe that he is well with her. The Reputation of having listen'd to a Fool, is all her Reward for having been abused by him; and if she is so unhappy as to meet with more than one such Gallant, the Public calls them all her Lovers.

These, dear *Isaac*, are some of the Reasons which determine the Opinion of the Inconstancy of the Fair Sex. The Multitude think upon this Occasion as they do in all other Cases, but not with better Judgment than they are wont to do. There are two Reasons which induce me to think that the Women are more constant than the Men. The first is a sort of Confusion that is inseparable from their Levities, which, let what will be said, constrains them very much. The second is the Vivacity of their Sentiments; the tenderest Man compar'd to a Woman really in Love, being as cold as Ice. 'Tis over the Fair Sex that Love exerts all its Prerogatives; 'tis that Sex which feels all the Force of its Transports, and its Impulses mix'd with Tenderness, Fear, Anger, Spite, Hope, and Jealousy. All these Passions reign in the Heart of a Woman that is in Love; one while indeed they succeed to one another, and at another time they act all together.

History has transmitted to us the Names and Actions of a great many Women, who have distinguish'd themselves by their Constancy and Fidelity. Without going back to past Centuries, we see Passions every Day that justify my Opinion. A Nazarene Doctor of my Acquaintance, a great Di-  
rector

rector of Consciences, said once in my Company, that delicate and tender Love is the roughest Enemy which the Tribunal where the *Parisians* are absolv'd from their Sins, finds among the Women. In my former Letters I mention'd that sort of Spiritual Pond to thee, where the Monks assume the Prerogative of washing away Sins on the Repetition of certain Prayers, or the Observation of certain Fasts by them enjoin'd. They all agree, that a Woman who has had several Amours, often sacrifices her Lovers to avoid fasting three *Saturdays*; but they affirm, that a Woman whose Heart has been smitten but once, had rather keep ten Lents than suppress one single Glance of her Eye, or render it less wanton.

Perhaps thou wilt ask me, why the Women who are so attach'd to their Lovers, are so unstable in respect to their Friends? I will tell thee for Answer, That with them Friendship is generally no more than a Colour for Love. A Bosom-Friend among Women, is only another Word for Confidant, whose Reign continues no longer than while he discharges his Trust well; for as soon as he neglects it, and is no longer useful, his Credit sinks, he becomes indifferent, and sometimes a Burden. But the Secrets intrusted with him, oblige those that imparted them to carry it fair to him, and this Constraint is often attended with Hatred in the Tail of it.

Don't fear, my dear *Isaac*, that our Friendship will have any such Fate; for 'tis founded on Virtue, and cemented by Esteem, so that nothing can shake it. Thy Life is as dear to me as my own; *Pylades* was not fonder of *Orestes*. I own to thee, that I have been under terrible Apprehensions, since thou acquaintedst me of thy Conversion, and could wish it had not been known, till thou had'st been gone.

gone from *Constantinople*. I am afraid thy Brethren will owe thee a Spite; for I know the vindictive Temper of our Nation. There is nothing that thy Brethren will not do to punish thee, for having abandon'd them. I will now give thee an Instance of their Rage.

When *Spinosa* publish'd his Book, the *Jews* were enrag'd against him; they look'd on him as an Apostate the more dangerous, because he thoroughly knew all the Principles of our Law, understood *Hebrew* perfectly, and was capable of doing us a great deal of Mischief. Nevertheless he had not yet left our Communion, but went, tho' with a careless Air, to the Synagogue. One Day, as he was going out of it, a fanatical *Jew* gave him a Wound with a Knife; which, tho' it did not prove mortal, he totally abandon'd the Faith of *Israel*; and after that Accident had no farther Correspondence with us.

Our Nation has been in all Ages revengeful, and has not stuck even at Treachery to satisfy its Resentment. I am so much in Pain for thy Life, that it obliges me to speak against my own Brethren; but, in short, thy Safety is a lawful Excuse for the Liberty I take in reproving those Offences. *Tacitus*, a *Roman* Historian, whose Authority is of great Weight, accuses our Fathers of bearing a cruel Hatred and Antipathy to all who are not of their Faith. Some *French* Writers say, that we were drove out of their Country for no Cause, but for the Evils we endeavour'd to bring upon the whole Nation. Others say, we were accused of a Design to poison their Wells and Fountains. The Knights of *Malta* charge us with having been the Cause of the Loss of *Rhodes*, out of spite to their Religion. In the Name of the God of our Fathers, dear *Isaac*, take great Care of thy own Safety.

If thou dost but consider how much those Prejudices are to be dreaded, with which we are inspir'd by Superstition, thou wilt see that thou can'st not take too much Care to defend thyself from the Attacks that may be made upon thee, which are the more dangerous because they are cover'd with the Veil of Religion. How often has not this specious Pretext been made use of, to colour the most secret Vices? 'Twas Fanaticism, which, under the Cloke of Zeal for *Nazarenism*, depriv'd *France* of the greatest of her Kings; Monkish Superstition made several Thrusts at his Life. In fine, a Monster vomited up in Wrath by Hell, encourag'd by the Remnant of the League, seduced by pernicious Discourses, nourished in Rebellion, and born to be the Plague of its Country, did that in one Moment, which was out of the Power of twenty Battles.

The Hatred which is owing to Differences in Religion is implacable, and with the Generality of People seems to justify the most enormous Transgressions. The Priests who are concern'd in this Quarrel, exasperate the Minds of other Men by their Preachments, Exhortations, and Examples. The People fondly follow those who are at the Head of their Religion: They are accusom'd to look upon them as the Oracles of the Deity. And judge thou whether there is any Crime which silly People will not commit, when they think they thereby perform the Law of the Almighty, and secure to themselves everlasting Happiness.

Consider well, dear *Isaac*, what I have been saying; take heed of thy Brethren the Rabbies; be upon thy Guard against other *Jews*; and, in a word, beware of all those whom thy Change of Opinion may any wise concern.

Live as peaceable and contented as I wish.



## L E T T E R XLVII.

*From JACOB BRITO, at Turin, to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.*

I Shall be going very quickly, dear *Monceca*, to *Venice*; for a Week is the most that I purpose to spend at *Turin*. I acquainted thee before of what I had observ'd most remarkable in the Manners of the *Piedmontese*; and since my last Letter I have made but very little Discovery. The *Piedmontese* Manner of Living is so uniform, that it does not furnish that Variety of Reflections which rise so fast at *Paris*. They live, and think at *Turin* the last Day of the Year as they did on the first; and the only thing in which any Change is perceivable, is the Fashion of Dress. The Ladies and the fine Sparks are incessantly following the *French* Modes; but here are none of those sudden Alterations of Manners and Customs. This Nation is incapable of being infatuated with one Set of Opinions in the Morning, and with the contrary at Night; for it has neither Vivacity enough, nor enough of Inconstancy. If *St. Paris* had acquired the same Credit at *Turin*, as he had some time ago at *Paris*, he would still have preserv'd it; whereas this poor Saint has no Devotees here, but a few Fanatics and Fish-Women.

Great Honours are paid in this Country to one *Philip de Neri*, who is said to be the Guardian of the City of *Turin*, and its Advocate with God. It has  
a mag-

a magnificent Temple \*, adorn'd with Pictures by the greatest Masters †. In one Place he is drawn, supported by Angels and Cherubims, to the Presence of God, and by him admitted into his Glory. A Number of Lamps burn incessantly before this Image: And hither the *Piedmontese* come to offer their Vows, and put up their Prayers to their Protector. Near this Altar is the Sanctuary, in which the *Nazarenes* pretend that God resides; but where one Man addresses his Vows directly to God, there's a hundred that only address him thro' the Canal of *Philip de Neri*.

The *Nazarenes*, and especially the *Italians*, seem as if they were afraid to call upon God himself, just like certain Persons who having offended another, have not the Power or Courage to stand in his Presence, and therefore send Proposals of Accommodation by a third Hand. I ask'd them, if they thought, when they address'd themselves to *Philip de Neri*, that God did not hear them, and if they imagin'd it was possible that there was any Place in which God was not present? They made me answer, That they did not presume to maintain such an Error. *If it be so, said I, and that God knows your Conversation with Philip de Neri, why don't you apply to him directly? Such Ceremonies may as well be avoided, and you should not go so far round about; for before your Protector makes his Report, God has already heard you.*

\* This Church is not yet finish'd, but Men are continually at work upon it, and it will be one of the finest Fabrics in *Italy*.

† There is one by *Carlo Maratti*, another by *Trevigiani*, and a third by the famous *Solyman*; and it is the latter which represents the Admission of *Philip de Neri* into Heaven.

The *Nazarenes* evade these Arguments by vain Sophistry ; they pretend that by the Intercession of a Saint, whose Prayers are always pure, and well receiv'd by the Almighty, their Petitions are more easily granted. Poor blind Sots ! who don't see that 'tis the Purity and Disposition of the Heart of him, who prays upon Earth, that engages Favours from Heaven. Were it not so, a Miscreant might hope to obtain God's Mercy, as well as an honest Man. God does not depend upon the Saints for his Judgment of the Heart. If he did the Celestial Court wou'd be like a *Norman* Tribunal, and People wou'd be sav'd or damn'd according as they had a good Solicitor or Advocate, and as they could engage his Friendship by a great Number of Tapers burnt to his Honour, or by some other Presents. If this were the Case, I assure thee, dear *Monceca*, that this *Philip de Neri* would have a great deal of Work upon his Hands, and that he would be oblig'd to undertake the Affairs of all the Inhabitants of *Turin*.

I was Yesterday at a Festival which was celebrated in his Temple, where a Monk pronounc'd his Panegyric, and extoll'd him highly because he was never marry'd, but hindred all his Disciples from ever entring into that State, by obliging them as well as himself to stick to the Order of the Priesthood, from which all are excluded that are not Batchelors. This Preacher expatiated a good deal upon the Observation of Chastity, and on the State of Purity, of which he gave so fine a Description, that it put Marriage quite out of Countenance. I was very much astonish'd that they suffer'd Maxims to be publish'd, so contrary to the good of Society. *If all these People*, said I to my self, *who hear this Declaimer go away convinc'd by his Sophistry, Piedmont will soon be depopulated ; we shall see nothing for one*  
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while but Priests, Fryars, and Bigots. Society will soon be ruin'd, and the Country destroy'd: According to this Preacher, the State of Celibacy is much the purest and most agreeable to Nazarenism. In a Religion they who believe it ought to strive to attain to Perfection. All the Piedmontese therefore will follow his Advice, and by keeping to Celibacy will ruin Society.

We think very differently, dear Monceca, for in our Holy Religion Multiplication is commanded: 'Tis promis'd and granted to us by Heaven as an essential Mark of its Goodness. As to the Suppression of Marriage among the Nazarene Priests, Vanity has been partly the Occasion of it; for by that means they thought to render themselves more respected by the People. 'Tis said that when they met to determine this Question, all the old Men were for continuing the Licence for the Priests to marry; but that the young ones strongly opposed, and carried it. But the Disorders with which that Restriction has been attended, have given cause to all Men of Sense to regret the Loss of the antient Custom. And one of the Nazarene sovereign Pontiffs says expressly in his Writings, That in order to prevent and stop much Wickedness, it were very necessary to restore things to their old Footing \*.

When the Preacher had finish'd his Panegyric, several Hymns were sung to Music; and the fa-

\* This is the learned Pope Pius II. among whose Sentences and Proverbs we read this, *Sacerdotibus magnâ ratione sublatis Nuptias majori restituendas videri. i. e.* There was a great Reason for taking away Priests Marriages, but there is a greater for restoring them. See Platina's *Lives of the Popes*, printed at Venice, by Fontaneto 1518, in Folio, pag. 155, and pag. 399, of the Folio Edition at Venice, by Leoncino.



mous *Somis*, of whom I have already made mention to thee, play'd upon the Violin so sweetly, that the Souls of all who heard the Harmony, seem'd to be in a Rapture. In all the Praise of which they were so lavish to *Philip de Neri*, very little mention was made of God, and he was not invoc'd at all till towards the Conclusion of the Festival and Ceremony.

As they went out of the *Nazarene* Temple, I ask'd where I might again hear that famous Musician, who had given me such a Delight. When I was at *Rome* I heard one *Montanari*, Scholar to the famous *Corelli*, the Father of Harmony: He had as great Practice as this *Piedmontese*, but he had neither his Taste, nor Sweetness, nor that Command of his Instrument. He was so able a Man, that the *Grecians* wou'd certainly have erected a Statue to him. He would have had People in abundance to certify, that *Apollo* had lain with his Mother: He would have been told to his Face, that he was not the Son of his reputed Father; and after his Death he would have had the same Honours paid him at *Athens*, as *Philip de Neri* has at *Turin*. I was told that I might hear him play in a Concert that was held once every Week, at a certain rich Man's House: I desired a Friend of mine to carry me thither, where I heard another Musician \*, who was as good at the Violoncello as *Somis* was at the Violin; so that it seem'd to me as if Heaven had form'd the two Musicians for one another, and that they were the only fit Persons to play in Concert. I was surpriz'd at the few fine Voices I heard here, for there are not above one or two at *Turin* that sing tolerably. The *Piedmontese* have as excellent Symphonists, as they have pitiful Singers. Nevertheless, as they are a

\* *Lanceta.*

conceited People, they don't care to own the Fact.

Painting is as much a favourite Science at *Turin* as in the rest of *Italy*, yet really there are none but Daubers in the City, except only one *Beaumont*, Painter to the King of *Sardinia*, who colours tolerably well, and designs correctly; but he is dull, not much acquainted with History, and conceited of his own Performances, which fall very short of that Perfection to which he fancies he has brought them. Some time ago there was a Painter in this City, one Chevalier *Daniël*, a *Fleming* by Birth, a good Colourist, as his Countrymen generally are, but a better Designer than any of 'em. He died a while ago, and is succeeded by this *Beaumont*.

The *Piedmontese* in general have a Regard for the Liberal Arts, but are very ignorant in the Sciences, as I signified to thee in one of my former Letters. When they hear mention made of several learned Men in *Europe*, they ask, whether they are good Catholics? If the Answers be, that they are *Armenians*, *Protestants*, *Jansenists*, *Jews*, then they run down *le Clerc* for a Blockhead, *Bayle* for a Fool, *Arnaud* for a Lyar, and *Leo of Modena* \* for an Ignoramus. They are surpriz'd that any body should think a Man to be possess'd of common Sense that is separated from their Communion. Whoever does not believe as the Monks believe, is according to them a Fool in this World, and damn'd in the next. The Libraries of the learned Men in this Country, consist of the Works of a great many Divines of this side of the Mountains, and some *Italian* Poets. They who pretend to be skill'd in the living Languages, have besides these some Romances

\* A *Jewish* Rabbi, who wrote of the Sects and Ceremonies of the *Jews* in *Italian*.

and *French* Story-Books which the Booksellers send for from *Geneva*, where all those little Pieces are reprinted. Thou perceivest, dear *Monceca*, that were a Man to study forty Years in these Libraries, he would be but a stranger to the Truth, and his Head wou'd be stuff'd with Chimæras. Judge therefore of the *Piedmontese* Philosophers.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and write to me hereafter at *Venice*.



## L E T T E R XLVIII.

*From* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to*  
JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice.

SINCE I have been at *Paris*, the learned Men here have a double Portion of my Esteem. When I was at *Constantinople*, I had no Notion of their Excellency and Dignity; but I look upon them now as the Preceptors of Mankind, and as the Organs which the Divinity employs to reveal to Men the Secrets of Nature. Instead of thinking as the *Piedmontese* do, who regard Learning in none but those of their own Religion, I esteem Knowledge and Merit wherever I find them: I revere them in a *Nazarene* as well as in a *Mahometan*, and abstracting from Matters of Faith, I learn of those that can give me Light.

The Men of Learning are accused of Pride and Haughtiness; but this is not the Character of those that have acquir'd a just Reputation. No body was more dispassionate than *Bayle*, more sociable than *Des Cartes* and *Gassendi*, and more modest than

*Locke.* They who talk at that rate of the truly learned Men, confound them with certain diminutive Authors, who think themselves perfect, how much soever the Public flights them. *Racine* was a whole Year composing his Tragedy of *Phædra*, the Master-piece of the Theatre; and before he committed it to the Stage, he consulted his Friends a long time, corrected several Passages by their Advice, and waited for the Success of his Performance before he wou'd presume to pronounce it a good one. *Prado* wrote the same Piece in a Month's time, gave it out boldly to be acted, and assured the Public that it was excellent: But it happen'd to him as it does commonly to the half-witted Authors; his Work quickly went to the Chandlers Shops, whereas *Racine's* will reach to the latest Posterity.

Great Men are always reserv'd and modest, and being content with meriting Praise, don't endeavour to court it; and for this they are the more praiseworthy, because if Vanity is pardonable, 'tis in that Man who deserves those shining Compliments, which are so becoming so many learned Men.

Honours are bestow'd every day upon a Fool of Quality, or the Son, Grandson, or Great-Grandson of a Fool of Quality: Because a Man reckons up a long Train of ignorant ridiculous Ancestors, whose Example he follows to a hair; he has forsooth a Right to be exempted from a Number of Imposts, and enjoys several Privileges that exalt him above the rest of his Fellow-Subjects. Suppose a Man had one of his Ancestors Captain of a Troop of Horse in the time of the Croisades, what's that to me? What, shall I be oblig'd to pay Homage to an Ideot, because one of his Grandfathers was knock'd o'the head by a *Saracen*, or because he made a Voyage beyond Sea? And shall I take

no manner of notice of another Man who is of service to the whole World, whose moral Precepts form the Manners of the People, whose Mathematical Discoveries enrich whole Nations, and whose Knowledge transmits the History of the present or past Ages to the latest Posterity? A Man must be a Fool, even as bad a Fool as the Person that is homag'd, to prefer chimerical Nobility to Learning and Virtue.

Mankind are pretty well come off from that servile Submission which they used to pay to old musty Rolls. There was a Time when as much Respect was paid throughout *Europe* to antient Titles, as the *Egyptians* formerly had for Crocodiles, and the Onions that grew in their Gardens. But this slavish Veneration is shaken off, and this Superstition is banish'd to the petty Princes of *Germany*, where every Man, who, to the Misfortune of Human Race, is born a Baron or a Landlord, assumes it as his Privilege to torment the miserable Peasants that are his Vassals. He thinks himself as good a Sovereign as any in the World, tho' his Territory is seldom a League in Extent. His gross Ignorance, which leaves him in doubt, whether the World itself is above two hundred, is the only thing that can excuse his Vanity. In many Countries it is common to meet with these petty Tyrants, who have nothing of Nobility but Antiquity, no Manners but Corruption, and nothing of Man but the Shape. Dost think, dear *Brito*, that a Person who only makes use of his natural Reason, can prefer such Nobles, that act only by Instinct, to Persons illustrious for their Learning, and recommendable for their Candor? Because a Man has a Right to add the Title of Duke or Marquis to his Name, shall he therefore impose on Men of good Sense? If that

were the Case, Nobility would be a Charm to Ideots.

Posterity wisely regulates the Rewards due to Men of Learning, and equals them to the greatest Princes: Three thousand Years after their Death, their Honour is not tarnish'd by that of the most renowned Heroes. *Homer* is as well known as *Achilles*, and the Name of *Virgil* as famous as that of *Augustus*. The able Historian, the famous Poet, the great Philosopher have an Advantage over the Conqueror and the General. The Remembrance of the latter only represents that of some past Actions to the Imagination; but the Works of the Learned transmit their Genius, and revive the Knowledge of their Authors from Age to Age. Twenty Centuries after they are dead and rotten, they speak with as much Eloquence and Vivacity as when living, and all that read their Writings perceive their Genius. *Horace* and *Virgil* are as fragrant in these our Days, as they were at the Court of *Augustus*. The Heroes who have only render'd themselves famous by their Actions, have not near such an Ascendant over our Hearts: The bare Recital of a Fact is not so affecting, as a brisk and lively Conversation, which is the Method that good Writers take to work upon our Minds. When I read *Ovid's* Elegies, I sympathize with his Affliction. I traverse Nature step by step in the Works of *Lucretius*, and fancy that I hear him unfolding the most hidden Secrets.

Heroes are infinitely obliged to the Poets and Historians, but the latter are seldom beholden to the former. *Achilles* owes part of his Glory to *Homer*: If there had been no Historians, it would scarce have been known that there was such a Man as *Alexander*. This Prince very well knew how happy a  
great

great Monarch, an able General, a famous Conqueror ought to think himself, if he could get an eminent Writer to transmit the principal Events of his Life to Posterity. How many Heroes as famous as *Achilles* and *Ulysses* are doom'd to eternal Oblivion, for want of a *Homer* to immortalise their Actions?

I know not, dear *Brita*, whether thou wilt be of my Opinion, I look upon a truly learned Man as one design'd for acting a Part in Life, and after Death, superior to that of many Princes and Monarchs. Who knows any thing of a Number of Kings that indulg'd themselves on their Thrones, in effeminate Indolence, and seem'd only invested with Royalty to shew that they were incapable to support the Weight of it: Their Names indeed are to be found in the Chronological Tables of the Empires: And some Persons who read History, know that in such a Year there reign'd such a Prince; but the rest of the World knows not whether there ever was such a King, or at most but his Name. Whereas when a Man of Learning leaves his Works to Posterity, he becomes more famous from Age to Age, and Time only serves to enhance his Merit: He is made free of all Nations, and his Works are translated into all their Languages: From the West to the East he is known, reverenc'd and caress'd; Children, Persons of ripe Age, old Men, all know his Works, and take a pleasure in quoting them; and the Fathers of Families reckon the Collection of the Works of Great Men as part of the Estate which they leave to their Children. 'Tis in these Libraries which are now so common in *Europe*, that a Scholar even lives to see his own Works multiply; he causes the Genius by which he is animated, to be transfused into the several Kingdoms of *Europe*; and at one and the same Instance

he persuades, engages and captivates the Heart of one Man shut up in his Closet at *Stockholm*, and of another that lives in the Middle of *Paris*.

The Writings of Authors sometimes have that ascendant over the Mind, as to acquire more Esteem and Veneration from their Readers, than their Persons could possibly do. I don't believe that any *Nazarene* would ever have canonized *Socrates*, if he had known him intimately when living. A Doctor of these latter Times was tempted every time that he read how bravely that Philosopher died, to rank him in the Number of the blessed *Nazarenes*. He owns that he had much ado to forbear calling out, *Socrates, pray for us* \*. How many Noblemen, Princes and Generals liv'd in the Time of this Great Man, that are intirely unknown to us? And how many are come to our Knowledge, whom we don't think worthy of our Esteem or Notice?

Believe me, dear *Brito*, let Ignorance publish whatsoever it will, Study is the true Road that leads to the latest Posterity †: 'Tis a Way that is

\* *Vix tempero quin dicam Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.* Erasmus in Colloquiis.

† By Study, said one of the Antients, the Philosopher becomes more wise; the Warrior more intrepid and more experienc'd; the Sovereign learns to govern with Equity; and there's not a Man upon Earth, in whatsoever Rank Fortune has placed him, who does not gain new Improvements by the Study of the Sciences. *Desiderabilis eruditio literarum, quæ Naturam laudabilem eximie reddit ornatam. Ibi prudens invenit unde sapientior fiat. Ibi bellator reperit unde animi virtute roboratur. Inde Princeps accipit quemadmodum populos sub æquitate componat. Nec aliqua in mundo potest esse fortuna, quam literarum non augeat gloriosa notitia.* Cassiodor. Var. lib. i. pag. 3.



open to the poor as well as the rich Man, to the *Plebeian* as well as the *Patrician*. Virtue and Application are the only Qualifications in the World, to make farther Progress in it than its Opposites. I laugh when I see some People hope to extend their Fame to Posterity, by going to be knock'd o'the head at a Breach. There is not a petty Country Gentleman, but if he once comes to be a Lieutenant of Foot, hopes to transmit his Name to future Generations. He thinks that hereafter the whole World will be a-gog to know whether the *Chevalier de Figeac, Cognac, Reignac, &c.* died at his Village or in a Trench. No body has better defin'd those subaltern Honours of War, and the Condition of a simple Officer than *Racine*. *Agrippina* speaking to *Burrhus*, reproaches him thus for his Ingratitude; *You, said she, whom I might have suffer'd to have grown grey in the obscure Honours of some Legions.*

The Notion which is entertain'd by the *French* in general, that Posterity will talk of all their Exploits, and the Prepossession conceiv'd by the most insignificant Gentlemen, that they are form'd to draw the Eyes of all *Europe* upon them, are Means of which the Government makes a good Handle; there being always People enough resolute to face Danger, Hunger, and Fatigue, solely from an Ambition to rise above the Vulgar; tho' for one that succeeds in his Projects, there are thirty thousand that die in the obscure Honours of Legions. But the Example of one is sufficient to encourage and animate all the rest.

The *Chevalier de Maisin*, whom I have often mention'd to thee, told me a pleasant Story of a Country Gentleman, who had spent the first Years of his Life in the Service; but being at last dispirited by Wounds, Fatigues, and the little Hopes

of his Advancement, he retired to his Village to end his Days in Peace. Nevertheless he still preserv'd his warlike Temper, and was perpetually talking to his Parson and the Parishioners of his former Atchievements, and of what he wou'd have done moreover, if he had continued in the Service. At last falling sick, and being at the Point of Death, the Curate propos'd a certain Ceremony to him that is observ'd by the *Nazarenes* when they are at the East Extremity, which they think very essential, and consists of a certain Oil with which they rub the Limbs of the Patient. The Officer consented to every thing; but as the Parson was going to perform his Office, *Doctor*, said he, *since I am so unfortunate as to die in my Bed, after having been in ten Battles and twenty Sieges, please to mitigate my Pains, and don't let me undergo the Ceremony of Burghers: Be so good as to make an Alteration in it; and if I must needs be liquor'd in order to be sav'd; I fancy that an Infusion of Gunpowder in Brandy wou'd make an Ointment that would suit better than Oil with my military Order, and my Rank as a Nobleman.*

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and study to live happy and contented.



## LETTER XLIX.

From JACOB BRITO, at Venice, to  
AARON MONCECA, at Paris.

I Have been these six Days at *Venice*, than which I never yet saw a Town that look'd more charming. One can't well avoid being astonish'd to see

a City built in the middle of the Sea, and as it were founded upon the Water. All the Streets of *Venice* are cut by Canals, so that you may go where you please in Gondola's, which are little cover'd Boats that serve at *Venice* instead of Coaches and Equipage.

The Government of this Republic is Aristocratical, all Affairs being regulated and govern'd by its Senate, at the Head of which presides the Doge. Tho' 'tis the Senate alone that makes Peace or War, lays on Taxes, &c. yet to see the grave Pride of the Doge, the Richness of his Clothes, and the Splendor of his Palace, one wou'd be apt to think him the true Sovereign of *Venice*; but he is only a Phantom that represents the Authority of the Senate, and has often less Credit than another Nobleman. He has but one Vote as a Senator, yet his imaginary Sovereignty gives him a right to go to all the Courts of Judicature, and to the public Tribunals, where he may give his Verdict in doubtful Cases; but any other Senator has a Right to oppose it.

The Noble *Venicians* are stately and haughty, infatuated with the Dignity of their Rank, and perfect Slaves to it. Their State Policy forbids them to have any Correspondence with Ambassadors, or with People that are attach'd to them, and very little with Foreigners of a certain Rank; and were they to act differently, they would not only be suspected, but it would furnish a material Handle to turn them out of their Offices. The Nobles are divided into three Classes; the first at its Institution consisted but of a dozen Families, which were call'd *Electoral*, but a little after four were added, and in process of Time eight more. The Second Class consists of all the Nobles whose Names are written in the Golden Book. And the Third of those

those whose Families have been ennobled in the Exigencies of the Republic, on the Payment of an Hundred Thousand Ducats. The latter are not employ'd in the great Offices; and they act much the same Part at *Venice*, as the Financiers do in *France* and *Piedmont*, who have bought a Right to forget their Parents and their old Ancestors, by the Purchase of a Skin of Parchment.

These new Nobles are nevertheless as haughty as the old Standards; they think themselves equal to the greatest Princes, and expect a Deference and slavish Respect to be paid them by every breathing Creature in the Country. A *Frenchman* walking in the Square of *St. Mark*, happen'd heedlessly to jostle a noble *Venetian*, who thereupon gravely took him by the Arm, and ask'd him what Beast he thought the most heavy and unweildly? The *Frenchman* being quite surpriz'd at the Question, and not knowing the Reason why the *Venetian* apply'd to him rather than to any body else for his Information, paus'd a while without a Word of Answer. But the *Venetian* without abating a jot of his Gravity, putting the same Question to him again, the *Frenchman* answer'd frankly, that he thought the Elephant the most unweildly Beast. Well then, said the *Venetian*, with a proud Air, take care for the future, Mr. Elephant, how you jostle a Noble *Venetian*. *Impara Signior Elephante, che non s'impegne un Nobile Venetiano*. Another Nobleman being in a narrow Street, so that he cou'd not pass by reason of the long Sword of a *Spaniard* that went before him, ask'd him very gravely, *If he should run over, or under him? Signor, si cavalca, o si passe sotto?* It would be dangerous to make an Answer to those Jokes which have the Air of Invec-tive; for at *Venice* if a Man should be wanting in the

the Respect to a Nobleman, he would run himself into a Scrape that he could not easily get out of.

The Scandalous Chronicle says, that in the principal Families one Brother alone marries for all the rest. I believe that this Custom is not so common as is pretended, yet I don't think 'tis totally disused. The Humour of the *Venetians* and their Vanity, may be the Occasion of a Conduct so blameable. If in a numerous Family all the Brothers were to marry, the great Number of Children that might survive, would soon impoverish the richest Families. That Grandeur of which the Nobles are such Idolizers, if it be not supported by Wealth, would languish in the second Generation, and hardly keep alive to the third. For 'tis at *Venice* as it is elsewhere, a poor Nobleman is not near so much respected as a rich one.

Devotion is no Hindrance to the Intrigues of the *Venetians*; and it may be affirm'd, that if the Brothers in a great many Families had only this Barrier to force, in order to enjoy the Privilege of having but one and the same Woman, the Bar wou'd soon be laid open.

The *Venetians* believe so-so in God, and have much more Faith in St. *Mark* than in the Pope. St. *Mark* has been the Patron and Protector of their City, ever since his Corps was translated thither from *Alexandria*. Before him *Theodore* was their tutelar Saint; but the *Venetians* were too vain to put up with a common Saint, who was of no service, but at the Beginning of a small Republic. They would have a new Patron answerable to their Fortune, and therefore cashier'd their old Protector, and chose a Saint of the first Class, to whose Honour they erected a Temple, which may be look'd upon as one of the finest Fabrics in *Europe*. 'Tis full of immense Wealth, and has a  
vast

vaſt Revenue. The Procurators of *St. Mark* are the Nobles that are intruſted with the Diſtribution of thoſe Eſtates, Part of which is applied to the Relief of the Poor. Theſe Procurators have the Prerogative to wear a Ducal Robe, *i. e.* a Gown with long Sleeves, which trail to the Ground.

Notwithſtanding the mighty Veneration of the *Venetians* for *St. Mark*, they are not a jot the better *Nazarenes*, and the chief Men even boaſt that they have very little Religion. An Ambaſſador who was ſent from the Republic to the King of *Sardinia*, had been deſired by a Biſhop to talk to ſome *Piedmonteſe* that had Relations at *Geneva*, to endeavour to reclaim one of his Nephews, who had abandon'd the *Romiſh* Communion, and was retired to that City. When the Ambaſſador arriv'd at *Turin*, he was in no great haſte to perform the Biſhop's Commiſſion: But happening to be one day with the Envoys of *Geneva*, he recollected the Affair, and aſk'd them if they did not know ſuch a Refugee whom he named to them? the *Geneveſe* having ſaid a great many good Things of him, *I am charm'd*, ſaid the Ambaſſador, *to hear ſo good a Character of him. His Uncle, the Biſhop of Aquapendente, deſired me to try if I could diſſuade him from the Step he has taken; but I am the more ſurprized that he ſhou'd leave the Care of his Conversion to me, becauſe ſuch Commiſſions are ſcarce ever given to Venetians.*

The Freedom which is enjoy'd in this City, has often brought Great Men to it, for the ſake of finding Shelter from the Bigottry of the other *Italians*. *Peter Aretin*, a Native of *Arezzo* in *Tuſcany*, ſo famous for his Satyrs and ſeveral other Compoſitions, came to ſettle at *Venice* in the Beginning of the ſixteenth Century, in order to enjoy the Privilege of writing freely. The *Nazarene* Pontiffs condemn'd his Writings, and eſpecially

ly his *Dialogues*, his *Letters*, and his *Arguments*; nevertheless they were at the same time publicly printed at *Venice*, and several other Editions of them publish'd afterwards under the Nose of the Magistrates.

The *Venetians* are, in the general, neither so lively nor so quick of Invention as some People of *Italy*, but their Slowness is owing to the Reflections which they make upon the Things that they have a mind to undertake. They examine an Affair maturely before they enter upon it, and therefore generally bring it to a happy Issue. They are magnificent, artful, and very discreet; but their Women are proud and insolent; and as to their Virtues, Chastity is seldom one of the Number. The Ladies at *Venice* are so tender-hearted, that their Discretion is not Proof against Opportunity. The Citizens follow their Example. As to the Wives of the Mechanics and the common People, Gallantry with them is a public Trade, which has its particular Rules and Maxims. There's not above one in ten of those common Prostitutes, but their own Mothers or Aunts make the Bargain for them, and settle the Price of their Virginity, by a Bargain made a long time beforehand, in order to deliver them when they come to such an Age, on the Payment of an hundred or two hundred Ducats, *in order, say they, that they may have wherewithal to marry.* A Mother who had covenanted with a Foreigner to give him her Daughter for two hundred Ducats, perceiving that he deferred taking her from time to time, on pretence that she was not yet ripe, and that she had not yet enough of Bubby, she was so tired out with all his Put-offs, that she went one Day to him to know his final Resolution; Sir, said she, *you must be so good as to take a speedy Resolution; for the Reverend Father, Preacher of one of the chief Convents in Venice*

Venice (whose Name she mention'd) *is upon Treaty for her, and has already made a very handsome Offer.* The Foreigner, who perhaps was very glad to get quit of his Promise, and thought much of two hundred Ducats that he was to deposit for her, agreed that the Reverend Father shou'd strike the Bargain, which he accordingly concluded in Form, not thinking the Fruit so green as the Gentleman did.

Besides these private Gallantries, there's an astonishing Number of Courtezans at *Venice*, who have their full Liberty, and often gain great Credit among the Populace. They go into the Nuns Convents, to visit the Sisters of those with whom they have an Intrigue, and receive a great many Caresses from them, which are always follow'd with some Presents, consisting of Sweet-meats, and Agnus Dei's; for the *Venetian* Courtezans are not only as numerous, but as devout as those at *Rome*. They fast on *Saturdays*, have a great Veneration for some She-Saint or other, to whose Protection they commit themselves, and carry on their Occupation very devoutly.

There's nothing that can be so amusing to a Philosopher, or indeed every Man that exercises his Reason, as to take a Walk about Nine o'Clock in the Evening, in the Street *la Serena* at *Rome*: There you shall see two hundred Women sitting at their Doors, waiting patiently for their good Luck. When a Man is disposed to make a Purchase, which he is always sure to repent of, he gives a Handkerchief to the Beauty whom he has a mind to single out from the rest, and she conducts the new Sultan into her Apartment. The Chambers of these Priestesses of *Venus* are all much alike, being on the first Floor even with the Street. All their Furniture is a Bed with white Curtains, a  
Table,



Table, three wooden Chairs, and an Image of some *Madona*, with a Lamp burning before it, which serves also to light the Room. Before Matters are push'd to a certain Point, a Curtain is drawn before the Image of the *Madona*, that she may not perceive what passes. When all is over, the Curtain is open'd again; and thus the Picture is cover'd and uncover'd ten times a-day, if the Mistress of the House has but as many different Intrigues.

To what Lengths do some People's Conceits carry them, and to what Irregularities do they think to reconcile Religion!

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and live content and happy.



## L E T T E R L.

*From* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to*  
JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice.

*Dear* BRITO,

I Have just escap'd one of the greatest Dangers that ever I ran in my whole Life. I had like to have fallen in Love, and in Love too with a young Lady that was amiable, but fickle; witty, but whimsical; engaging, but proud and haughty. Consider to what a Pass I should have been reduced, if I had fallen a Slave to that dangerous Beauty? But a Heart like mine could not be reconcil'd to the Method of courting a *Paris* Lady. Being accusom'd to the Simplicity and Sincerity of our *Greek* Women, I could not bear the Coquetry and Intrigue of the *French*. A Man must be born in their Country,  
that

that can brook such extraordinary Behaviour. In general the *Nazarenes* only think they are in Love; and I dare say that in *France, Italy, Germany, England*, and in *Spain* too, they have no Notion of true Love: It is a Passion only understood in *Asia*, where it reigns with Delicacy, and seems to agree with Reason.

I know not whether thou did'st ever reflect on the various Characters of the *Nazarene* Lovers.

The *Frenchman* personates a much more passionate Lover than he is in reality: Being a Coquet in his Temper, light, fickle, and hot-headed by Nature, he dances, he capers, he whistles, sings, and plays the Fool with his Mistress. If she gives him a favourable Hearing, he soon abandons her. If she is cruel, he does not value it. A Stanza or two of a Song against the Fair-one, rewards him for his lost Labour; and he is ready to act the same Part with the next Woman, that he did with her that was insensible of his Addresses. Nothing can fix his Inconstancy; his Love is pall'd by Enjoyment, and disgusted by Hardheartedness.

The *Italian*, firm in his Projects, stable in his Resolution, attacks a Heart as a General of an Army does a Town; he disposes his Batteries, fortifies himself with all the Helps of Art, endeavours to block up the Fair-one's House, and to hinder his Rivals from entering; he maintains secret Correspondences in the Place, engages the Chambermaid or some other Domestic in his Interest. If he succeeds in his Attack, he confines his Mistress for the rest of her Life; and to reward her for her Love, he robs her of her Liberty. If he is forced to raise the Siege, he takes Revenge not only on his Rivals by endeavouring to poison them, but also on the Object of his Love, which becomes that of his Hatred, and he ruins her Reputation by the basest Calumnies.

The

The *Englishman* only loves out of Pride; he has too great a Conceit of his own Perfections to think himself oblig'd to any Woman for liking him. If he is belov'd, he fancies that he deserves it: If he is not, it does not at all affect him, because he expects to find Women enough in the World that will be fond of him. He measures his Fortune by her Wealth, and judges of a Heart by the Guineas it costs him to gain it.

The *German* is phlegmatic, and not easily affected; his dull, cold, circumspect, and pensive Temperament contributes to his Insensibility; for he is scarce ever known to be in love, but when he is chear'd by the Favours of *Bacchus*. His Passion is kindled by the Wine, and evaporates with its Fumes. If sometimes he puts a Force upon his natural Constitution, he quickly returns to his former Phlegm; and Love, with the *Germans*, is as cold as the Flakes of Northern Ice.

The proud *Spaniard* pretends to love to Distraction; he puts himself into an Agony, torments himself, and sighs by Day in the Churches, and by Night under his Mistress's Windows, where he plays upon the Guitar all the Carnival-time, and lashes himself devoutly in Lent\*. 'Tis all for the sake of Love. He interests the very Saints in his Amours, and causes Collects to be sung to St. *Francis* and St. *Anthony*, to engage them to turn his Mistress's Heart. If he has not Help from Heaven, he has recourse to Hell; he consults Diviners, Sorcerers, and Magi-

\* 'Tis the Custom in *Spain* to make Processions in the Night during the Holy Week. There's a great Number of People who whip themselves in the Streets, by way of Penance; and when they come under their Mistress's Windows, they there take their Station, and give themselves a hundred Lashes to her Honour and Glory.

cians, and Love banishes all Thoughts of the Inquisition out of his Mind. Is he happy? He forgets his Care and Pains, and, what is more, his Love; and often stabs the Person to the Heart whom he ador'd, but Vanity has more Share in his Guilt than Jealousy.

In *Asia*, Love is a gentle settled Passion, which does not set Men a raving, but gives them a Concern that is amiable; they are not at so much Pains and Fatigue to purchase the Favour of the Fair on the one hand, and on the other their Appetites are not pall'd with Enjoyment. They don't commit so many Follies for the sake of the Women, as they do in *France*, but then they love them more sincerely.

In the *Nazarene* Countries, the Men are the principal Cause that the Fair Sex is no better; for they set them daily Examples of Capriciousness, Inconstancy, Treachery, and Dishonesty. A Woman who sees her Husband commit Adultery, and look upon it as no more than a Piece of Gallantry, thinks she has a right to indulge the same Inclination. A young Lady whom her Lover abandons after making a thousand Vows, and the most solemn Promises, imagines that to be False and Perjured are no very great Crimes, since they don't stain her Lover's Reputation.

I tremble, dear *Brito*, when I think what a Risk I ran; I was upon the very Brink of the Precipice; I actually felt those Motions in my Heart, the Consequences of which are so pernicious in this Country: My Eyes roved with Pleasure over the enchanting Features of the fair Lady to whom I pay'd a secret Homage. In short, I was just ready to kiss my Chain, when Reflection forced me from the Misfortunes into which I was plunging: I consider'd to what Uneasiness I was going to abandon myself, and  
in

in spite of myself resolv'd no more to see my lovely Charmer, whose Absence has quite made way for the Return of my Reason. When I say this, I would not have it thought that I pride myself in the Character of being Insensible, for there's no body but at some time or other has felt the Darts of Love; but if I must be in love, I am willing to take care that my Passions may prove a Blessing to me, and not a Torture.

I laugh at those Philosophers who flatter themselves with the vain Conceit, that they are the better Men because they were never in Love. I shou'd like as well to hear a Man boast that he was always stupid; for in short, dear *Brito*, a 'Tenderness for the Fair Sex is the noblest Present that we have received from Heaven: 'Tis a Delicacy in Sentiments that distinguishes us from the rest of Animals, and the finest Inventions are owing to a strong Desire to please. 'Twas an ingenious female Lover that invented Sculpture and Drawing; and they say, 'twas Love that gave the first Idea of Writing. If we inquire into the most considerable Events, we shall find the Source of them in Love. *Europe* is oblig'd to this Passion for most of its Amusements; the Invention of all Recreations being solely to please the Fair Sex. *The Man in low Life makes his Court to his Sweetheart by regaling her with Wine, Sweetmeats, and Dainties. The Noble and the Rich divert theirs with Plays, Masquerades, Balls, Airings, and Journeys into the Country.* Were it not for Love, every thing in Nature wou'd languish, for 'tis the Soul of the World, and the Harmony of the Universe. Heaven gave to Man, at his Creation, that Byass which inclines him to Women; and the Fondness we have for them, is a Present from the Deity. We ought not to blush at our being in Love, since we do but therein conform to the Impressions

pressions of Nature, which have nothing criminal, unless when they are corrupted by our Vices and Debauchery.

It seems as if the *Nazarenes* were not capable of loving any Woman but those whom they cannot court, without incurring Guilt. The *French* especially maintain, that Marriage and Enjoyment are the Tomb of Love, and this Passion does not appear amiable to them if it be not guilty. To this purpose they tell a pleasant Story, for the Truth of which I will not be answerable, tho' it is inserted in the Works of an Historian of great Authority \*. 'Tis commonly said in *France* among the Debauchees, that the Conclusion of the Civil Wars in that Kingdom, which they had like to have entirely destroy'd at the Beginning of the Reign of *Henry IV.* was owing to two or three Harlots. The Duke de *Maine*, who was Head of the League against that Monarch, was a Man of a slow dilatory Temper, which gave great Encouragement to the bold Enterprizes of his Enemies. In the Height of his Rebellion, having the Misfortune to go with four or five of his Friends to the *Hotel de Carnavalet*, he there debauch'd himself with some Ladies of Pleasure, and was so fond of 'em, that he had need to have kept his Chamber for several Days †. But the Affairs of his Party being in such a Situation, that he could only take palliative Remedies, the Poison lurk'd in his Body, and render'd him still more sluggish, sullen, and chagrin, which lessen'd the Vigour of his Party. And the said Duke, not long after this Adventure, being weary and quite jaded with the Toils of War, began to lend an Ear to Proposals of Peace.

\* *Mezeray*.

† *Mezeray's Chronol. Abridgm. Anno 1589.*

If the same Accident had happen'd to *Henry IV.*, the Popish Historians of his Time, who were great Admirers of Prodigies, would not have fail'd to have transmitted this Intrigue of the three Whores to Posterity, as a Miracle wrought in Favour of the League. But as it happen'd to the Head of the Holy Confederacy, they have left it in profound Oblivion.

This Story is a very evident Proof of the Incontinency and Lewdness of the *Nazarenes*; they condemn the Plurality of Wives among the *Turks*, while they ruin their Health and Substance with Harlots, whom they call *Creatures form'd to alleviate the Troubles and Cares of Human Life*. All the rich People keep them in Pay; those are in best Keeping that belong to the Farmers-General, or Officers of the Revenue, from whom they squeeze considerable Sums, to the great Impoverishment of the Commonalty, the Widows and the Orphans. The Ladies whose Gallants are Landed Men, generally live up to the Height of what they get, indulge themselves in good Cheer for twenty Years, keep grand Equipages, and several Domestics, and when they begin to grow old, they find themselves as poor as they were before, all their Gains having been laid out in Cloaths, Lace, *Champaign* Wine and Ribband. Those Ladies who have rich Clergymen for their Gallants, fare somewhat better at last, for they still make a shift to live under the Protection of the Altar, even when they are cashier'd and turn'd out of Pay.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*; may'st thou prosper in thy Affairs, and marry a chaste and faithful Woman, who may be the Glory of *Israel*, and from whom that Lamp may rise, which is to illuminate the Nations.



## L E T T E R L I.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Rabbi, at Constanti-  
nople.*

**I** Long to hear from thee, and till I do shall always be uneasy. I cannot send thee the Books that are coming from *Holland*, 'till thou art arriv'd in *Egypt*; nor shall I have them at *Paris* these six Weeks. By the Letters I have receiv'd from *Moses Rodrigo*, I hope thou wilt have reason to be satisfied. He tells me that he has made it his Business to pick out the best of History: I look upon good Books of that kind, as inestimable Treasure; their Scarcity makes them the more valuable, for ten Centuries scarce produce four or five Historians that approach to Perfection.

In some of my former Letters I observ'd to thee how obscure History was in the first Ages, and the Difficulty of coming at the Truth in Times so far back: And when we come down to later Times, we find another Perplexity altogether as bad. The too great Number of Historians, and the Ignorance and Incapacity of most of them, throw the Mind into Confusion, and are very prejudicial to that Clearness and Truth, that ought to be expected in a regular Disposition of the Facts with which one wou'd wish to enrich the Understanding as a Repository to be made use of upon occasion by the help of the Memory. The indigested Heap of a thousand Impertinences with which the Historians stuff their Works, enervates the Mind of the Reader; and the  
great



great Number of Facts, either false or insignificant, carries away that Attention which only ought to be given to those that are of sufficient Importance to ingross it.

The antient *Greek* and *Latin* Historians that are remaining to this Day, have been refin'd by Time. When I say *refin'd*, I don't intend it of their Works, of which we have unhappily lost considerable Fragments; but I mean that they are the only Works come to our hands which have not suffer'd Extinction, nor fallen into that Oblivion, the Fate of a great many indifferent Writers which there must have been in their Time. For all Ages have abounded with bad Authors, whose Writings were never transmitted to their Posterity: On the other hand, we see that the Works of the Antients which have liv'd to this Day, are the same which were preferr'd before all the others both in *Athens* and in old *Rome*.

The Reason for the Preservation of a good Book preferable to an indifferent or a bad one, is so plain that it needs little Argument to prove it. We are as careful to keep what is valuable, as we are careless to preserve what we slight. The *Greek* and *Roman* Historians that are preserv'd to our Time, are precious Deposits which twenty Ages have transmitted to us, that we might transmit them with the same Care to our latest Posterity.

A thousand Years hence our Childrens Children will have none but the best of our Historians, without being plagued by any bad ones, which for the Satisfaction of the World, will be condemn'd in the mean time to Destruction by Moths, Dust, and Chandlers Shops. The illustrious *Thuanus* will live to the latest Times; and *Mezeray*, with some other Historians, tho' not quite so perfect as the former, will also share the Esteem of Posterity. But how

many Writers will perish successively one after another? How many are there now half-begotten Brats, that are dead as soon as born? How many have been smother'd in the Cradle? Alas! who knows any thing now of a hundred Books that were written only twenty Years ago? Where's the Man who is for cultivating a good Taste, and cautious of giving his Attention to insipid Stuff, told with an Emphasis, and amplify'd with a Parcel of *impertinent Nothings*, that will venture to dip into *Larrey's* pretended History of the *Seven Wise Men*, augmented by another Author of *Remarks*, which are still worse than the Body of the Work, and have nothing to recommend them but the being as short as they are insignificant? The History of *Lewis XIV.* and that of *William III \**, written by the same Author, have also seen their last Day, and our Grandchildren will not be put to the trouble of endeavouring to render that Writer consistent with himself, who makes two Heroes, and two very indifferent Princes alternately, of those two Monarchs. In the History of *Lewis XIV.* *William III.* is a very ordinary Character; and in the History of *William III.* the Hero *Lewis XIV.* is so far eclips'd in his Merit that he becomes quite another Man. Our Grandchildren, I say, will be inform'd of such Actions of those Monarchs as really shew'd them to be Great Men, by reading the Works of some good Writer, who will preserve the Decency due to History, and the Regard which is challeng'd by Truth.

I will not trouble thee, dear *Isaac*, with a Detail of all the Books that are every Day spawn'd, and turn'd to waste Paper. I need only mention three, viz. 1. *The History of the Negotiations of the Peace of Nimeguen*, which is an ill-digested Narrative,

\* In the History of *England*.

with

with an insipid Stile, and an irregular ill-conducted Series of Reflections in the most common Class of Politics, and of Facts told an hundred times before.

2. *The Present State of the United Provinces*; a sad untimely mishapen Production, which owes its hasty Birth to the Impatience of its Author to forestall another who was writing on the same Subject.

3. *The History of Poland, in the Reign of Augustus II*; an insipid Collection from Gazettes, swell'd with a tedious Number of Pieces, and written in such a low creeping Stile as is agreeable to the Irregularity and Inaccuracy of the Author in the Disposition of his Facts.

There are many others of this sort, which scarce do any harm to Literature and the Sciences, because of the little Vend there is of 'em; but the Case is different with respect to the Works of certain Authors, which are very pernicious in the Republic of Letters, and very likely to corrupt the Reader's Taste. These seem cover'd with a specious Veil, and to have an excellent Foundation, but then the Superstructure is all bad. These Writers are the *Continuers* of *Histories* written by some Men of Eminence, with whose Countenance they impose upon the Public, and as one may say, sponge upon a Reputation to which they have no manner of Right. But 'tis of no long Duration; for when their Works are consider'd with any Care, and those new Tomes which thus venture abroad are compared with the former, they are soon look'd upon as spurious Brats, that affect to be honour'd with the Name of a *Father* to whom they don't belong. Such are the *Continuers* of *Josephus*, *Grotius*, *Mezeray*, *Puffendorf*, *Bossuet*, *Rapin de Thoyras*, and several others.

The Credit which good Books have establish'd with the Public would not be so encouraging to

those who continue them, if they consider'd what dangerous Rivals they are always sure to stand with. A moderate Diamond makes a bad Figure join'd with a fine Brilliant; but when alone, 'tis much more sparkling, and seems less defective. Thus the Continuation of *Fleury's Ecclesiastical History* would be a fine Piece, if it were not obscur'd by the Beauty of the first Part; and the last Volumes of *Don Quixote* would please well enough, if the others had not been publish'd before.

It actually requires more Imagination, and a greater Vivacity of Genius to continue a Work, than the first Author had: For the latter had nothing to do but to pursue his Ideas naturally as they arose; whereas he that comes after him is under such a Necessity of conforming to him, that he can but here and there make use of his own Imagination, being oblig'd to submit to the Ideas of him whose Work he continues, if he has a mind that it shou'd not appear to be two different Pieces that have little Connection with one another.

The great Number of indifferent, and indeed bad Writers, is a Hindrance to the Advancement of the Study of History. It should be one of the first Cares of him who applies to it, to be careful in the Choice of the Books in which he hopes to come at the exact Knowledge of the principal Facts: He must be cautious of trusting to Authors who have wrote with Partiality, to such as had it not in their power to be Masters of the Subject they treat of, and to those that wrote meerly for sordid Gain. If he confines himself only to the Reading of Historians that have not been fully'd and infected with these Blemishes, he will indeed have but a small Number of Writers to peruse; but then he will learn more from their single Works,

Works than from the immense Collection of others, which will only furnish him with false Ideas instead of those he would derive from good Authors, who, if they communicated but a certain Number of Facts to him, would however supply him with those that were true, and rang'd and distributed in due Order and Method.

To learn History from an Author devoted to a Party, is the same thing as to expect to know the Merits of a Cause depending between Plaintiff and Defendant, by hearing the Council of one side only. For a Man to apply himself to the Reading of an ignorant Historian, or one who is but indifferently acquainted with what he writes; to chuse such a one to conduct us to the Knowledge of the Truth of the Facts with which we want to be acquainted, is the same thing as giving the Preference to a blind Man to guide us in a dark Way. For a Man to found his Belief upon the Authority of one who writes for Hire, and has such a fix'd Price for his Praise, is to seek for Truth in Panegyric.

The famous *Gregorio Leti* was of *Machiavel's* Opinion, that an Historian ought to be of no Religion nor Country; I much rather think he shou'd have said, he ought to have neither Country nor Cash. For as to Religion, besides the Impiety there is in that Sentiment, it does not lay the Truth under a Necessity of being disguised. *De Thou* was a *Nazarene* Papist, and yet as much esteem'd by the *Nazarene* Protestants, as by those of his own Communion. I know very well that in all Religions there's a Number of Zealots, who can't bear to hear those of their own Faith found fault with, or the Virtues of such as they think in an Error commended. But an Historian does not write for Persons eat up with Prejudices, vile Slaves to their false Devotion. These may suck Chimæras enough from the Books

written by the Monks or Prelates of *Italy*, in whose Works they will find a Chain of Invectives against illustrious Persons, who while living merited the Esteem of the whole World.

Almost all the *Nazarene* Popish Writers are subject to be carry'd away by their Passions, and to worry in pieces all that oppose them, without any Regard to Truth. They think they have sufficient Authority from certain antient Doctors of theirs, call'd the *Fathers*; who were Men that vented their Invectives against all without Distinction that were not of their own Opinion, and respected neither Rank nor Virtue, but all was alike to them. If Credit may be given to their Works, what a horrid Monster must Posterity think the Emperor *Julian* was, whom they call'd an *Apostate*, tho' he was guilty of no other Crime than having quitted their Religion \*. For he was a chaste, sober, just Prince, and as brave and as elo-

\* No body has better defended *Julian* against the Calumnies of the Fathers, than *Mothè le Vayer*: ' Don't we know, says he in one Part of that Prince's ' *Elogium*, that the great Applause wherewith — *Jovian* was receiv'd by all the Militia, when he was ' proclaim'd Emperor, only proceeded from the Resemblance of his Name to that of *Julian*, from ' which it differ'd only in a Letter or two? Now, it ' is certain that a great part of that Militia was Christian, as is plain from the Choice they made of a Prince ' of our Religion. From whence therefore could proceed so great a Testimony of Affection to the Memory of an Idolater, a Persecutor of the Believers, ' if we don't attribute it to those shining, and truly ' Imperial Virtues, which did not fail to make him ' belov'd and esteem'd.' *Le Mothè le Vayer* of the Virtue of the Pagans, in his Works, tom. i. p. 696. of the Edition in Folio.

quent as *Cæsar*. Judge then what Certainty the *Nazarenes* have of the greatest part of past Transactions, and especially of those with which their Religion is connected.

There is also, dear *Isaac*, another sort of Books which is pernicious in the Study of History.. They are such as only furnish obscure Ideas, and are of no Service to our Understanding: To read them is to lose Time which may be employ'd to a much better Purpose. They commonly give important Titles to such Writings, and that's all the Book is good for. I have just now read a Book which may be rank'd in this Class; 'tis *The Introduction to the History of Asia, Africa, and America*, by Bruzenla Martiniere; a Compilation of certain Facts which all the World knew before, and confounded together without any proper Disposition, a Work in which there is nothing well digested, nothing new, nothing truly instructive, and written in a poor barren Stile. This is the Character of that Book: The Title strikes the Reader's Attention at first, but really the Author has made so little Improvement of *Puffendorf's* Idea, that he might as well have let it alone.

Fare well, dear *Isaac*, let me hear from thee; and may the God of our Fathers crown thee with Prosperity.



## L E T T E R LII.

From JACOB BRITO, at Venice, to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.

I Am still endeavouring to inform myself of the Manners of the People: I find a Pleasure in comparing the Genius and Customs of the several Nations through which I travel. The *Venetians* are not like the other *Italians*, superstitiously devoted to the Sentiments of the Priests and Friars. They make use of their Reason, and taking Advantage of that Lamp of Nature, which they have received from Heaven to be a Light to their Conduct, their Minds are not fetter'd by that Bigotry which renders Men lazy, and effeminate. In my Travels in *Italy*, I have perceiv'd that the People there are more or less timorous and degenerate, according as they are more or less subject to the Monks, whose low slavish Ideas debase the Minds of those that imitate or associate with them.

This First Reflection leads me to make a Second upon the *Nazarene* Religion. It cannot be disputed that many of its Professors are brave and valiant, yet it seems to be a Religion proper only for Cowards; for their Doctors inspire them with a Contempt of Injuries and Poverty, and command them even to love their Enemies, and those that persecute them: Precepts that are directly contrary to the Notions of Honour, which requires that a notable Revenge should be taken for an Affront: that is receiv'd in public.



If instead of the *Roman* Legions *Julius Cæsar* had taken the Field with Two hundred thousand Men that had counted their Beads in the Morning, celebrated their Vespers in the Evening, and who without retaliating Injuries had borne them with the Patience and Tranquillity of a *Stoic*, or rather of a *Nazarene*, as they call themselves; I very much doubt whether that *Roman* would have ever conquer'd a single Village of the *Gauls*. The most that he could have expected from such devout Soldiers, was the Stand they would have made for their Country and their God, for whom they would have brav'd Death itself. But there must be something more than this to form good Troops. Whoever expects Success in the military Profession, must do all the Mischief he can to his Enemy, *must prevent him, surprize him, put him to the Sword, burn his Magazines, starve him, plunder him*, and all these Feats must be perform'd with Dispatch, without giving Time for consulting Casuists to know whether 'tis lawful upon such Occasion either to kill or burn. An Army would make little Progress, if before it resolv'd to give Battle, a supreme Council of Divines was to be assembled, to know whether it was lawful or not to meet the Enemy, or to avoid him. If I was the General of an Army, I should rather chuse to be obliged to consult the Entrails of Victims, or the Sacred Chicken after the Manner of the Antients. I should come off like an illustrious *Roman*, by causing them to be drown'd if they would not eat, to the End that they might drink more at their Ease, and that the Augury might be the more favourable. But the Divines would not be so easy to manage as Chickens; they would form a thousand Disputes among themselves, of which there would be no End; and the Enemy would beat the religious Army ten

times before the Preliminaries were settled for deciding the Case of Conscience in Question. Surely the Command of such an Army would never have been accepted by the Marshal *de Biron*, who broke a Captain whom he had nothing to reproach with but his taking some Precaution against the Prosecution of the Solicitor-General. *Are you of them,* said he to the Captain, *that have such a Dread of Justice? I break you: You shall never serve me more: For every Soldier that is afraid of a Pen, is afraid of a Sword.* What dost think, dear *Monceca*, this Duke would have done to a Soldier or an Officer, that should have desired Time to take Advice of his Spiritual Director before he took the Field? 'Tis my Opinion he would have treated him as a Sacred Chick.

The *Nazarenes* themselves agree that their Conduct and their Actions in the Point of War are intirely contrary to the Spirit of their Religion: But they throw the Blame of all the Harm they are capable of doing, upon those who being at the Head of Government, ought never to engage the Subjects in any Wars but what are just. This first Principle being laid down, they divest themselves of all other Scruples, and *plunder, rob, kill, massacre, burn, &c.* and all without consulting the Divines, not even the Almoners or Chaplains, of whom there are almost as many in their Armies as there are Sutlers. For the Friars too have some small Credit with the *Nazarene* Soldiers, and they are so crafty that they even reap some Advantages from People that have the least Esteem for them. Nevertheless they have no Authority at *Venice*; for the Senate are so jealous of their Power that they would put all the Monks in their Dominions to Death, if they offer'd to cabal and form Parties. Nay, for less than this, they would  
hang

hang up the Superior of the chief Convent of *Venice*, who if he did but talk a little too freely of Government, his Affair wou'd soon be dispatch'd. For in this Country the Ministry must be treated with as much Respect as there is Liberty for all the rest: Nay 'tis almost as dangerous to commend as to censure them; for the *Venetians* will have neither Good nor Ill said of their Administration; and all Discussions upon this Head are what they hate. They expect that their Government should be rever'd as the *Athenians* rever'd the Unknown God\*, to whom, tho' they erected an Altar, yet they contented themselves with honouring him in Silence, without speaking of his Qualities or his Attributes.

As a *Genoese* Carver was one day at work in a Church of the *Nazarene* Friars † who had sent for him from *Venice* for that Purpose, two *French* Gentlemen newly arriv'd there, went to take a view of his Works, and after commending the Beauty of them, they fell by degrees into Conversation with him about the Government of the Republic; when these *Frenchmen*, according to the laudable Custom of some of their Countrymen, which is, never to approve of any thing among Foreigners, launch'd out into Invectives against the Senate and the Republic, and to the Senators they gave the Nick-name of *Pantalons*, or *Buffoons*, more than once. The poor *Genoese* pleaded for the *Venetians* to the best of his Power; but he had a hard Match to cope with; they were two to one, and the *Frenchmen* gave him no Quarter. The very next Day after this Conversation, the poor *Genoese* was sent for by the Council of State: He appear'd with trembling before the Senators, not knowing

\* *Deo ignoto.*

† The Jesuits.

what he was accused of, and little thinking of the *Frenchmen* whom he had seen the Day before. When he came into the Council-room he was ask'd, If he had any Acquaintance with the two Persons that he discoursed with about the Government of the Republic? This made him quake the more; and he answer'd with quivering Lips, That he thought he had said nothing but what was for the Advantage and Honour of the Senate. Upon this he was order'd to go into an adjacent Room where he immediately cast his Eyes upon the two *Frenchmen* dead and hang'd to the Cieling. He then thought he had not an hour more to live; but being carried back before the Senators, he that was the President said to him gravely, *Hold your peace another time, Friend; our Republic has no need of an Advocate of your Class.* And then he was sent about his Business. But the poor *Genoese* was in such a Consternation and Terror at what he had seen, that he did not so much as return to take his Leave of the Monks for whom he had been at work, but went instantly from *Venice*, and swore heartily he would never go thither again.

Tho' the State Inquisition is so terrible in this Country, yet the Church Inquisition has no Power here. This Tribunal, which the *Nazarenes* call the *Holy Office*, is composed of a Father Inquisitor, of the Pope's Nuncio residing at *Venice*, of the Patriarch of the City, who is a Noble *Venetian*, and of two other Noblemen who are chosen out of the principal Senators, and without whose Presence all Proceedings are null and void. The Estates of those whom the Inquisition condemns, fall to their Heirs; and therefore the Friars at *Venice* have neither the Power of tyrannizing over the People, nor that of seizing their Estates; nor are their Books, in what manner soever they are written,

written, and whatsoever Subject they treat of, within the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. The Republic alone can take Cognizance of what relates to Printing; therefore at *Venice* every one is at liberty to publish what he thinks fit, provided the Republic is out of the question. The principal Books of all Religions have been printed in this City. The *Jews* have publish'd an Edition of the *Talmud* there. *Leo of Modena*, and several others have publish'd their Works there; and there the *Turks* have also printed their *Alcoran*. But what is more surprizing among the *Nazarenes*, is, that Books have been published there against the Friars, Priests, and even the sovereign Pontiffs\*; and that these Works have likewise been authorized by the Magistrates, and receiv'd too with Applause.

The *Venetians* make their Religion truckle to their Politics; they adapt their Creed to the public Welfare, and their Faith to the Times and Circumstances. They permit the University of *Padua* to confer the Doctor's Degree, without demanding the Confession of the Faith injoin'd by the the Pontiffs, from those who are admitted. Consequently the Body of the *Venetian* Doctors is a Medley of *Nazarene* Papists, *Nazarene* Schismatics, *Nazarene* Writers, *Jews* and *Turks* too, if any Cadi of *Constantinople* has a Fancy to take the Degree of a Doctor: For the Republic is of Opinion that the Paths which lead to the Sciences ought to be open to all Men, and that it is cruel to barricade them upon the vain Pretext of Religion; which ought not to excuse us from the Obligations that are necessary for the Peace and Happiness of Society.

\* Hist. of the Council of *Trent*, by Father *Paul*, &c.  
The

The *Venetians* are so zealous to procure the Comforts and Accomodations of Life for all Men in general, that they extend their Precaution a little too far as to what they think must conduce to their Benefit. Some Years ago the Number of Courtezans being extremely diminish'd, the Republic sent for a great many from Foreign Parts. Signior *Dogliano*, who has wrote a Treatise of the Remarkables of *Venice*, highly extols the Wisdom of the Senate, who, by making Provision for the Necessities of human Frailty, secured the Honour of sober modest Women, whose Virtue was liable to the Surprize of a thousand Snares. I defy the Precaution of Magistrates, whose Office it is to take care of the Public Good, to extend farther than to think how to gratify the Desires of Libertines, and to dissipate the Fears of jealous Husbands; this is a thing of which none but the *Venetians* are capable. In truth, (begging *Dogliano's* Pardon) I don't think this Action so great and commendable as he does; and in order to prevent the Insults of Libertines upon honest Women, I think it wou'd have been right to take the same Method as *Sixtus V.* did, when he banish'd the Whores from *Rome*. This Pontiff punish'd Vice severely, and kept the Rakes and Vagabonds in awe. But the *Venetians* Philosophy is better natur'd; they are like certain *German* Prelates, who formerly permitted the Priests and Friars of their Diocesess to have Concubines, on the Payment of a certain annual Tribute\*. The Republic does the very same thing, and makes a Profit by the Sins of the Harlots, which bring in above a Hundred Thousand Sequins a Year into the public Treasure.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and prosper in all thy Undertakings.

\* See the *Centum Gravamina apud Wolffium. Lectio-  
num Memorabil.* vol. ii. p. 223.      L E T-



## L E T T E R LIII.

*From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Smyrna,  
formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople, to  
AARON MONCECA, at Paris.*

**T**IS now a Week, dear *Monceca*, since I left the Imperial City for good and all, and am come away, Thanks be to the God of our Fathers, without any Disaster befalling me. My *quondam* Brethren knew nothing of the Reason of my Departure; I made them believe that I was going to *Smyrna* upon Business. In this City I am now happily arriv'd, and from thence I purpose to set out shortly for *Cairo*.

I was not sorry to quit the Imperial City, where my Residence was not so pleasant as thou did'st imagine. A thousand Objects were eternally in my View there, which were shocking to my Sense and Reason. I could not make use of my Philosophy in a Country so disturb'd, where Wickedness, Rebellion, Murder, Avarice, and Cruelty, were perpetually offending my Mind. I look upon the *Ottoman* Empire as Shambles, where the Sultans and Viziers are the Butchers that slay and sacrifice Persons of every Rank and Condition to their Lewdness. The despotic Power with which the Grand Signiors are invested, and that which they grant to their Viziers, are Sources of crying Injustice. The *Ottoman* Court is like the Tribunal of the Inquisition, where  
Wealth

Wealth or Virtue is sure to be condemn'd. Every Part of the Seraglio inspires Fear and Terror. Death seems to be always at the Heels of such as approach the Sultans; and it looks as if those Princes only promoted them, that their Fall might be the more remarkable.

The Entrance of the Palaces of the Sovereigns is commonly adorn'd with Columns of Marble, and Pieces of Sculpture, worthy of Royal Grandeur. But as soon as one enters the Gates of that fatal Palace the Seraglio, one sees nothing but the Heads of two or three hundred Baffas, or other unfortunate Men nail'd up, whose Fate inspires one with Horror. The Inside of it is as sad as the Outside: Every Part of it looks dreadful; and be a Person ever so innocent, he is never sure that he shall not suffer Death or Punishment. In the Seraglio it may be said, that when a Man rises in the Morning, he does not know whether he shall live till Night; for the smallest Fault, the least Heedlessness, is often punish'd with Death.

The Imperial City is not a jot more agreeable than the Court, for one is perpetually alarm'd with Accounts of the Banishment or Death of the most considerable Citizens. Every new Grand Vizier sacrifices a certain Number of Victims to his Avarice, as soon as he attains to that high Station. *Constantinople* is a Sheepfold, where the Flocks are only fatten'd for the Slaughter. The *Jews* and *Greeks* are the most expos'd to these Acts of Violence. They pay dear for the Advantage of exercising their Religion, for they are perpetually squeez'd and robb'd of the Fruit of their Labour and Pains without Pity. Our unfortunate Nation is incessantly tormented at *Constantinople*: For in a State of Calm and Tranquillity, we are a Prey to the Avarice of the Officers of the *Porte*; and in the Times of Di-



Disturbance and Mutiny, we are the Sport of an insolent Militia, whose Covetousness is seldom to be satisfy'd without our Wealth. We seem to have more Liberty in the *Mahometan*, than in the *Nazarene* Countries; yet we are much more persecuted there, and at least as much hated.

I know not whether thou did'st ever hear of the Oppression of our People by the *Persians*, about a hundred and fifty Years ago. The Musti's of *Ispahan*, coveting the Treasure of the *Jews* who inhabited that City, presented a Memorial to the *Sophi Sba-Abas*, wherein they desired him to see the Orders and Precepts contain'd in the *Alcoran* put in execution; of which one of the most material related to the Conversion of the *Jews*, who were obliged five hundred Years after the Publication of Mahomet's Religion, to embrace the *Mussulmen's Faith*, or to be utterly destroy'd. The *Sophi*, who was a very devout Man in his Religion, but yet did not care to dip his Hands in innocent Blood, sent for the *Jews*, and examin'd them what Faith they had in *Mahomet*. Judge thou, dear *Monceca*, what a Confusion our Brethren were in at this Question: They saw it was put to them with no other Design, but to convince them of Blasphemy against the false *Mussulman* Prophet, and under that Pretext to ruin and destroy them entirely. After having conferr'd with one another for a time, they resolv'd to soften their Answer as much as possible, and told the *Sophi*, that tho' their Religion hinder'd them from believing in any other Prophet but *Moses*, yet they did not think that *Mahomet* was a false Prophet, because he was descended from *Ismael*, the Son of *Abraham*; and that they were desirous of remaining his Majesty's most humble Subjects and Slaves. But the Scene was not ended till the *Jews* had given him two millions of Money in Gold. And, in order to  
extort.

extort another Supply, and to pave the Way for some other Oppression, they were oblig'd to fix the Time in which they expected their *Messiah* to come. Being as much astonish'd at this second Demand as at the first, they answered, That their Deliverer might, for aught they knew, come to-morrow. *Well then*, said the Sophi, *I give you seventy Years, and will cause your Answer to be register'd in the Archives of the Empire, to the end that if you are Impostors, and your Messiah does not appear by that Time, you may be proscrib'd and banish'd out of the Empire, by such Successors of mine as shall be upon the Throne when the seventy Years are expired.* This fatal Arret was afterwards really put in Execution, and *Shah-Abbas II.* caused a Declaration to be publish'd, commanding his Subjects, and the Foreigners that dwelt among them, to fall upon the Jews as so many wild Beasts, to put the Men, Women, and Children to the Sword, to seize their Estates, and to spare none but such as turn'd Mahometans. This Persecution lasted near three Years, till the Country was quite clear'd of our Brethren, of whom many were put to Death, and the rest fled to the *Indies* and *Mogul*. 'Tis said, that this bloody Proscription was owing to certain Letters from *Constantinople*, that made mention of the *Messiah's* being come upon Earth.

The *Messiah* then talk'd of, was that famous Impostor *Sabbathai Sevi*, who disgrac'd our Nation by their Readiness to swallow his Lyes. There are Jews still living at *Smyrna*, who saw this Knave. He chose this City for the Theatre of his Knavery; and here he acquired that Fame which reach'd from Pole to Pole, and was the more pernicious to us, the more it was taken notice of.

Since my Arrival here, I have been told some very particular Stories of this *Sabbathai Sevi*: He was born at *Smyrna*, and his Father was one *Mardochai*.

*dochai*, a sickly Man, always afflicted with Distempers; whereas, on the contrary, the Son was vigorous and well shap'd, with a grim Look, curl'd Hair, and his Whiskers turn'd up. He led a very austere Life, and was a rigid Observer of the Law of *Moses*, with which he was perfectly acquainted, as also with the Secrets of the *Talmud*. He might be about forty Years of Age, when he thought fit to give out that he was the *Messiah*. His Retinue consisted of five or six Rabbies, who went for his Disciples; of these *Nathan Benjamin* was one of the most considerable, and held most in Esteem. This *Jew* had the Character of a Man of very great Wisdom and Virtue, and was especially remarkable for his great Humility.

The Impostor *Sabbathai Sevi*, had soon a vast Number of Adherents and Followers, who, upon his Word, believ'd that he was really that illustrious Protector, who is to deliver our Nation from Captivity. Mankind being always ready to adhere blindly to what they like, and to embrace their first Ideas, most of the *Jews* that were dispersed through the four Parts of the World, put themselves in Motion, and prepar'd to list under the Banner of a Traitor who was a Scandal to our Religion. In *Persia*, towards *Susa*, there were above eight thousand *Jews* already assembled; and there were near a hundred thousand in *Barbary*, and the Deserts of *Tasilet*, that resolv'd to own him for their King and their Prophet. Those who liv'd in the remotest Countries, were infected to the same Degree with the Contagion and Phrenzy. Many *Jews*, who were dispersed in the North, and in *Holland*, sold their Houses to go to the *Levant*, and to live under the Empire of this new Sovereign. The *Nazarenes*, who always speak from Ill-will, say, that the *Jews* of *Amsterdam* had actually drawn up a Petition to  
be

be presented to *Sabbathai Sevi*, desiring that they might have the sole Licence of advancing Money to *Jerusalem* upon Pledges. 'Tis certain that the *Portuguese Refugee Jews*, had several Meetings to take proper Measures for the Ratification of their antient Titles; and they had resolv'd to depute one of their Body to *Smyrna*, to desire the New Deliverer to permit them to join the Title of *Don* to their Names, as they did formerly in *Portugal*, and that they might be stil'd in *Judæa* *Don Moses*, *Don Jacob*, &c. They were also for remonstrating, that in justice they ought to have a distinguish'd Rank and a separate Place in the Temple, being not used to go to the Synagogues of the *German Jews*, who were but miserable *Smaus*. But the thing which they had most at Heart was, to obtain some honourable Titles for their chief Men, for which they offer'd to pay very handsomely, and to give as much as they do now the *Nazarene* Princes that want Money.

Mean time, Heaven, in pity to the Mistake of our Nation, was resolv'd to strip off the Mask, and expose the Cheat; *Sabbathai Sevi* gave Notice to the *Jews* at *Smyrna*, that he was going to *Constantinople* to tell the Grand Signior that he must restore the Temple at *Jerusalem*. He embark'd accordingly in a *Turkish* Saïque, and there were People so infatuated as to believe, that the Vessel vanish'd as soon as *Sabbathai Sevi* went on board. But so far was this false Prophet from having the Command of all the Elements, that he had not the least Power over the Winds, which were always against him; so that it was near six Weeks before he got as far as the *Dardanelles*, where he was arrested by Order of the Grand Vizier, who having heard of *Sabbathai Sevi's* Impostures, thought it his Duty to examine him. The Man was clapp'd up in one of the *Eu-*  
*ropean*

ropean Castles; and the Vizier being obliged to go upon an Expedition to *Candia*, the Seducer of our Nation was left in Prison. Several *Jews*, who were still persuaded that he was the *Messiah*, flock'd from all Parts to see him; so that his Keepers grew rich by the Contributions they extorted from his Visitors. The Fame of this Impostor spread so much at last, that the Grand Signior order'd him to be carried to *Constantinople*, where having sent for him to the Seraglio, *I will now know*, said that Prince to him, *whether thou art the Messiah or not. Choose either to be bound to a Post, and to be made a Butt for my Cross-bow-men, or to turn Turk.* The miserable *Sabbathai Sevi* did not hesitate to save his Life at the Expence of his Religion. He put on the Turban, and the Grand Signior gave him both his Life and Liberty, to mortify our Nation, which was for a long time the Laughing-stock of the *Ottoman Empire*, and of the whole Universe. Let us never be too ready to give Credit to Reports; for when the Time of our Deliverance is come, the Miracles will be so evident, that all the World will be convinc'd of their Reality.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and preserve thy Health.





## L E T T E R   L I V .

AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Smyrna, formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople.

Y E S T E R D A Y I was an Eye-witness of a great Number of *Nazarene* Ceremonies, that I had never been present at before. The *Chevalier de Maisin*, to whom I have fresh Obligations every Day, desired me to go with him to one of his Relations that had been sick for some time past, and was at the Point of Death, insomuch that the Physicians said he cou'd not possibly live above twenty-four Hours at most: And in *France* 'tis the Custom, and a Decorum required by the nearest of kin, to meet at the dying Person's Chamber, to assist him to go out of this World with less Pain, and to give him the necessary Passports and Assistance for his Journey to the next.

An Enquiry only into the Customs of the *Nazarenes* while they are on their sick Beds, wou'd furnish Matter for a whole Volume of Reflections. As soon as a Man is down in a Fever, or any Disorder that endangers his Life, his Heir, who, generally speaking, longs for the happy Moment to see him expire, assumes, notwithstanding all his secret Joy, a sad and melancholy Countenance: So sorrowful does he look, that one would hardly believe he would survive the sick Man, who, being now deliver'd over to a Physician, *Galen's* Disciple takes him by the Hand, gravely feels his Pulse, coughs and spits before he utters a Word,  
and

and after that Prelude, he tells the Name of the Distemper in *Greek*; and as *Hippocrates* said, that *Life is short, Experience dangerous, and Learning difficult to acquire* \*, so the modern Doctor requires a Consultation of three Physicians, in order to know the Name and Seat of the Disease with Certainty. Mean time, in order to assist, support, and prepare Nature, he prescribes some anodyne and deterfive Clysters to cleanse, wash, and comfort the Bowels, and to diminish, abate, and dissipate the Vapours of the Brain. Then the Apothecary is sent for, who attends with his Apprentice, and a Boy to carry the Clyster-pipe, for it is not here as it is at *Constantinople*, where the same Doctor prescribes, prepares, and administers the Remedies. In *France* every Agent of *Hippocrates* has his regular District; the Physician's Business is to order; the Prerogative of the Apothecary is to purge upward and downward; and the Veins, Bones, and Muscles are in the Province of the Surgeons. Were a sick Man to die a hundred Deaths, not one of 'em must meddle in what does not belong to his Function. A Physician especially would be in Disgrace if he stoop'd to the subaltern Offices of the Apothecary; and it were enough to ruin his Reputation for ever, if he did but happen to lay his Finger on a Clyster-pipe, tho' by Mistake. There was a time too when the Apothecaries would fain have been exempted from giving Clysters themselves, and caus'd those Operations to be perform'd by their Apprentices, but the Physicians were scandalized at the grand Airs they gave themselves; they imagin'd the Apothecaries had an Ambition to rise above their Degree, and inroach upon the Privileges of the Physician, and therefore

\* *Vita brevis, Experimentum periculosum, Judicium difficile.* 'Tis the first of the Aphorisms of *Hippocrates*.

got an Act of the Faculty pass'd, *that they shou'd prepare and apply the Clysters with their own Hand, without having any help in that Operation by their Apprentices, who should only be Standers-by* \*.

A Nazarene who is sick is oblig'd to submit to the whole Ceremonial settled between *Esculapius's* Children. He must resolve with himself to die by Rule.

When the Physicians who are call'd to consult about the Origin and Cause of a Distemper have declar'd their Opinion, he who has the chief Care of restoring the <sup>as</sup>patient to Health, thanks his Brethren who are amply paid for their Advice. He then remains sole Master of the Field of Battle; he directs, he commands, and acts sovereignly, till the *Nazarene's* Distemper has brought him to the

\* The Physicians at *Paris*, after a long Debate, obtain'd an Arret forbidding the Apothecaries to prescribe to the Sick, and enjoining them to carry their Remedies themselves: *Renard* has banter'd this Dispute between the Physicians and the Apothecaries in his Comedy of the *Legatée*, wherein he makes *M. Cliftoret* say,

*Ils vouloient obliger tous nos Apoticaïres,  
A faire, & mettre en Place eux-mêmes leurs Clisteres;  
Et que tous nos Garçons ne fussent qu' assistans.  
Ma foi! ces Médecins sont de vilaines Gens!  
Il m'auroit fait beau voir, avecque des Lunettes,  
Faire, en jeune Apprentif, ces Fonctions secretes!*

Which may be thus *English'd*;

They would fain oblige all our Apothecaries not only to make their Clysters, but to apply them; and that all Apprentices should only be Spectators. Verily, these Physicians are sorry Men. It wou'd be a fine Sight indeed to see me poring with my Spectacles on my Nose, to perform those secret Functions, like a Prentice-boy.



Brink of the Grave. He then shares his Authority with the spiritual Director and Confessor. These Physicians of the Soul observe even more Formalities than those of the Body. As soon as they are call'd, they demand of the sick Persons to make a sincere Confession of all the Actions of their Lives; when they think that a Soul has been stain'd by any, they cleanse it and purify it by magic Words, which they mutter in the Ear of the Patient, and add several strange Gestures and Grimaces. After this, they ask the sick Persons if they are inclin'd to give any pious Legacy to the Saints, and to the Priests who serve at their Altars, in order to insure their Protection in the Journey they are going to enter upon. There are few *Nazarenes* but what leave something in their Wills to feast the Monks of their Quarter, for they wou'd really believe they shou'd be damn'd if some religious Society or other did not mutter some Anthem after their Death, and tune some Verse in favour of their Souls.

When the Confessor has made Provision for the Support and Nourishment of the spiritual Pastors, he takes care of the Patient's Family and Relations, causes some Legacy to be left them, more or less according as he takes a Fancy to them; for the Power which a Director has over a *Nazarene* on his Death-bed is exorbitant. The Patient thinks every thing well done, provided it be by Order of his Confessor, whom he looks upon as his Guardian Angel going to lead him by the Hand into the Heavenly Mansions. At last when he has but a Moment longer to live, a Ceremony is perform'd for him at parting, of which I cou'd never guess the Reason. A Priest dress'd in a white Linnen Surplice, and a piece of Stuff about his Neck three Inches wide, which falls down to his Knees, brings

a little Urn of Silver in which there's a very glutinous Oil, wherewith he rubs the sick Man's Limbs. After this Ceremony, he rehearses some Prayer in *Latin*, which the sick Person often does not understand one Word of, and orders the Soul to depart the Body in peace and quiet. This done, all the Company retire in Tears, and no body is left with the *Nazarene* but the Priest, who receives his last Sign, and continues with him while he expires, repeating some *Latin* Prayers in Honour of the dying Person's Patron, whom he forewarns to be ready to receive the Soul as soon as it is fled, and disingaged from the Shackles of the Body.

If I did not know that the *Nazarenes* believe the Soul to be spiritual, I shou'd imagine they made use of this Oil to make it easier for the subtle Matter to detach it self, and to evaporate thro' the Pores which such anointing wou'd open. But the *Nazarenes* are of Opinion that the Soul is meerly a Spirit breath'd into Man by the Divinity. Therefore it is impossible for me to penetrate into the Reason of this Custom, and indeed they have so many that 'tis difficult to know the Cause and Source of them all. I think always that I am thoroughly acquainted with their Manners, and yet I every now and then discover several things among them, which I was ignorant of before.

I was passing by a Church of the Monks one Evening about nine o'Clock, and seeing a great many Women come out of it, I had the Curiosity to know what they had been doing there; and for that purpose I apply'd to a *Nazarene* of my Acquaintance who was then with me. ' These Women, *said he*, are just come from their *Retreat*. ' What do you mean, *said I*, by coming from their *Retreat*? ' Why, *said he*, there are certain Con-  
vents

‘ vents of Monks who every Year give the Women, of whom they are their spiritual Directors, a sort of Respite from worldly Occupations for fifteen or sixteen Days together. They meet several times a day to hear the Exhortations of the Director then in vogue, who is commonly the Chief or Head of those pious Societies which the Monks call *Congregations*. Of these there are several Sorts, and for People of all the different Classes. By this means the Monks acquire great Credit, all the Assemblies being entirely devoted to the Orders by which they are conducted and directed.’ I said to the *Nazarene*, ‘ That I thought this was a good Custom, because the Reflections which may be made during such a Retreat for fifteen Days, when the Mind is not distracted by disturbing Ideas, may be useful, and tend to the Reformation of Manners. You are not well acquainted, *said he*, with the Nature of those Assemblies ; they are really Parties of Pleasure, and serve rather to animate the Desires, than to suppress them. A Woman in these external Appearances of Devotion finds an Opportunity of increasing her Assignations, and she who never used to see her Lover till after Dinner, sees him every time she goes to the Congregation. They who have not their full Liberty at home, are sure especially to take the Opportunity when their Husbands can’t suspect them ; and I’ll warrant you that half of the Women that you saw go out of the Church just now, have already forgot all the Exhortations they heard this Day. What I tell you (continued the *Nazarene*) is most strictly true, and such very frequent Assemblies for Devotion are dreadful Rocks on which the Virtue of the Fair Sex is in evident Danger of Splitting.

‘ ’Tis a Custom with us to send Missions to all  
‘ the Towns, to endeavour to reform the People,  
‘ and incline them to Virtue. A certain Bishop  
‘ who complain’d sadly of the Women and Girls of  
‘ his Diocese, and who preach’d and took a world  
‘ of fruitless Pains to restrain their Gallantries, re-  
‘ solv’d to have recourse to more effectual Reme-  
‘ dies. He sent for four of the most eminent Mis-  
‘ sionaries, whose Exhortations had immediately a  
‘ surprizing Effect: By four o’Clock in the Morn-  
‘ ing the Churches were full of People, who all  
‘ promis’d to lead better Lives than they had done  
‘ before: And one wou’d have thought that the  
‘ Diocefans of this Bishop were become *Nine-*  
‘ *vites*, to whom another *Jonah* was preaching  
‘ Repentance. The Women and Girls were above  
‘ all very assiduous at the several Assemblies which  
‘ were held by Night; and at Day-break the  
‘ Citizens Wives, the Country Women, and the  
‘ Ladies of Quality strove who shou’d be there first.  
‘ At length the Mission being ended, the pious  
‘ Prelate thought that his Flock was sanctify’d for  
‘ ever hereafter. At the Departure of the Missiona-  
‘ ries, the whole Town was in Tears, and the  
‘ young Women especially seem’d to be most  
‘ griev’d, which so affected the Preachers that they  
‘ promis’d to return again next Year. But the  
‘ Bishop was far from recalling them; for at the  
‘ end of that Year the Hospital had Eight hundred  
‘ Foundlings more to take care of than before.  
‘ The Mission was the real Occasion of this Multi-  
‘ plication, for the Fair Sex were not negligent of  
‘ the Liberty of going out at Night and Morning.  
‘ Their Gallants were not taken notice of at a Time  
‘ which was supposed to be devoted to Repentance;  
‘ and Love, which never loses its Prerogatives, defeated  
‘ all the Exhortations of the good Missionaries, who  
probably

‘ probably made a Trip to some other Town to serve  
 ‘ the State as effectually, and to repair the Preju-  
 ‘ dice occasion’d by the Celibacy of the Priests.’

I thought what the *Nazarene* had told me was pleasant enough, but I was uneasy to see how Men abuse the best and most useful Things, to favour their Crimes. The *French* are not the only People who make Religion serve as a Cloak for Actions that are the most contrary to Piety. All Nations and People, be their Faith what it will, make the most sacred Customs and the best establish’d Usages subservient to the Depravation of their Manners. The Women in *Turky* only desire leave to go to the Mosques for the sake of seeing their Lovers there; and there are many *Turks* that build a Chappel for them in their Seraglio. There are some too, who, to shorten all Ceremonies, make them believe that their Souls are mortal, and dispense with them from praying to God.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live content and happy.



## LETTER LV.

*From* AARON MONCECA, at Paris, *to*  
 JACOB BRITO, at Venice.

I Know not, dear *Brito*, whether the News from *Corfu* is so much talk’d of at *Venice* as it is at *Paris*; but what they give out here upon that Head is very surprizing and hardly credible, if we had not evident Assurances of it. Is there any thing, in short, so extraordinary as to see a Stranger come to an Island from the Coasts of *Africa*,

and be own'd as Sovereign by a People, and actually receiv'd as their Deliverer, and this too in the Face of all *Europe*, but forty or fifty Leagues from *France* and *Italy*, and no Power seem to be concern'd in it but the unhappy *Gencefe*, who are in a very perplex'd Situation. Were one to run over all the *Amadis*, I don't think there is any Adventure so romantic. I no longer wonder that *Sancho Pancha* had such firm Hopes of his being King of an Island. I perceive the thing was not impossible, provided his Master \* cou'd have given him wherewithal to buy Three thousand pair of Shoes, Four thousand Muskets, and Six Brass Guns; for that's the Present which the new King of *Corfica* has made to his People. He arriv'd at his new Government on board a Ship of Force, which, as they say, carried *English* Colours. He was dress'd in a fantastical manner, his Habit being a Medley of the various Modes of all Nations. His Robe was *Turkish*, the Sword by his Side was *Spanish*, his Peruke was *English*, his great Hat *German*, and his Cane was of the Halbert Fashion, like those used by the *French* Beaus. He must have some Reason for so whimsical a Medley. Perhaps he intends by his Dress to denote all the Dignities with which he is invested; for he assumes the Titles of a Grandee of *Spain*, a Lord of *England*, a Peer of *France*, Baron of the Holy Empire, and a Prince of the *Roman* Throne. His Sword *a la mode de Spain* supplies the Place of the *Golden Fleece*; his *English* Peruke that of the *Garter*; his Halbert-Cane that of the *Blue String*; his great *German* fashion'd Hat denotes the Quality of Baron of the Holy Empire; and his great scarlet Robe signifies the Diminutive of a Cardinal, or if you please a *Roman* Prince.

Notwithstanding the Banter of the Public upon Baron *Theodore I*, the new made King of *Corfica*, he has since his Arrival in that Country reduc'd the *Genoese* to a very dangerous State. He has taken the advantageous Post of *Porto Vecchio*, and the Town of *Sarsena*, in which he found a great quantity of Ammunition; and if he goes on at this rate, he will soon be in a Condition to lay Siege to *Bastia*, and to take the Capital of the Island from his Enemies. What is most surprizing in all the Actions and Proceedings of King *Theodore* is, that he is in no want of Money. Before he came to *Corfica*,

*La Nature marâtre, en ces afreux Climats,  
Produisoit, au lieu d'Or, du Fer & des Soldats \*.*

Step-Dame Nature in these hideous Climates,  
Instead of Gold, Soldiers produc'd and Iron.

Whereas now, there's not a Mountaineer in *Corfica* but can shew a Piece of Gold. The Coins that are most current in this Island are *Sequins*, *Murlitons* and *Portuguese* Pieces. The Wizard by whom this adventurous Knight-Errant is protect-ed, does not let him want for Money, and takes special Care of the Affairs of this new Monarch. All *Europe* is really as much perplex'd to know who this notable Magician can be, as it was at first to know the true Origin of Lord *Theodore*. Some said that it was Prince *Ragotski*, others the Duke de *Ripperda*, and their Reason for thinking so, was the Report that the Lord *Theodore* heard three Masses a Day. This is a Circumstance which I think might comport with the Bigotry of *Ragotski*, but it was ridiculous to imagine that the Duke de *Ripperda* cou'd turn a staunch *Nazarene*.

\* *Cæbillon* in *Rhadamistus* and *Zenobia*.

at *Morocco*. If that were true, I wou'd advise the *French* to send most of their Physicians and *Sorbonne* Doctors to take a Turn there.

The Name, Rank, and Quality of the new King, are indeed now no longer a Secret, all the World being agreed that he is the Baron *de Neuhoff*, born in the County of *la Mark*, and a Subject of the King of *Prussia*; but the Public is still at a Loss to discover who is that powerful Magician that so handsomly rewards a Knight-Errant, and that without putting him to the least Expence. But what would be the use of such Reflections as I might be capable of making on so mysterious a Subject; Time will discover the Secret, and nothing but Time can unravel so extraordinary an Adventure, which the more we examine we are the more surpriz'd at a thousand Incidents that render it the more marvellous and romantic. This Baron *de Neuhoff*, now King of *Corfica*, was a Year ago a Slave at *Algier*; which is a Circumstance of his Life that he himself acquaints the Public with, by a Letter that he wrote in the *German* Tongue to one of his Relations since his Arrival in his new Dominions. *You have not heard*, said he to him, *of the Misfortune I had to be taken at Sea last Year, and carry'd to Algier as a Slave; from which however, tho' with very considerable Loss, I have found means to deliver myself; but I must defer till another Opportunity to acquaint you of what I have since by the Divine Favour acquired.*

Don't you think it pleasant, dear *Brito*, to hear the Slave of an *Algerine* decline the owning his Obligations for his Grandeur to any thing but the Divine Favour; and that the Man who but a Year ago ran the risk of being bastinated for the least Fault, shou'd now say with an Emphasis, *Theodore I. by the Grace of God, King of Corfica and Bastia,*



Bastia, to the Officers of our Councils and Courts of Justice, to our Senators, Proveditors, Bailiffs, Stewards, &c. Greeting. These are the Frolics of blind Fortune which delights to raise a Man from nothing to the most distinguish'd Honours; and we often see a Man prefer'd from the Dregs of the People to great Employments. 'Tis true there are few Examples of so great and sudden a Rise as Lord *Theodore's*; yet if we go so far back as the first Origin of Kingly Power, we shall find that the Men who were design'd and elected to command their Fellow Creatures, had no greater or more just Prerogatives over the People, than *Theodore* has over the *Corficans*. The Name of King wou'd to this Day have been unknown in the World, if the common Interest of Mankind had not forc'd them to vest the chief Power and Authority in a single Person. The *Corficans* made desperate by the *Genoese*, have had recourse to a private Person to deliver them from Tyranny. If he restores them to Liberty, and frees them from Slavery, what signifies it to them what Condition he was born in?

*Un Guerrier généreux, que la Vertu couronne,  
 Vaut bien un Roi formé par le secours des Loix :  
 Le premier qui le fût n' eût pour lui que sa voix \*.*

' i. e. A Generous Warrior crown'd with Virtue,  
 is as good as a King form'd by the Help of the  
 Laws: The first Man that ever was a King, was  
 only so by his own Voice.

If we consider the Conduct of the *Corficans*, it does not seem to be a whit more ridiculous; they reward their Benefactor, they honour their Deliverer; why should it be deem'd criminal in them, to pay homage to Virtue, and to have Gratitude?

'Tis my opinion they act very judiciously, and that all their Proceedings are regulated by good Sense and sound Policy. Whatsoever Credit and Authority they have granted to their new Prince, they have nevertheless given a check to the monarchical Authority; and their Sovereign can lay no Tax nor Impost upon them, nor publish any new Law without the Approbation of his Great Council, which consists of Eighteen Senators that represent the States of the Kingdom. Lord *Theodore* has only the same Prerogatives as Men granted to the first Sovereigns\*, whom they elected; he commands the Armies, and does Justice according to the Laws and Customs of the Country, which he cannot change without the Consent of the Nation. In short, he has a great deal of Power to do good, but not the least Authority to do harm.

May they perish, dear *Brito*, who maintain the pernicious Maxim, that *Men were only created blindly to serve a single Person*. Nothing but Pride can make a Sentiment go down which violates all Laws, overturns the World, and seems to attack the Deity himself. The Laws were made before Sovereigns, who therefore are bound by them as well as their Subjects. A private Person who is wanting in Duty to his Country, and his Prince, is a dishonest Man; and a King who violates the Laws, and despises Justice, is unworthy to command.

Tyranny was unknown among Men, till the Time when the Ambition of the Courtiers deify'd the Viccs of the Sovereigns. The Crimes of bad Kings sprung from those of their Subjects; Flatterers poison'd the Majesty of the Throne, from whence they banish'd real Grandeur to make room

\* Thou shalt be our Captain in War, and thou shalt do us Justice.

for chimærical Honours, founded upon the Misfortunes of Mankind.

Princes ought to mind nothing but the good of their People to whom they are Fathers, or at least supply the Place of such. The Patriarchs to whom they succeeded were crown'd Kings and Fathers of their Families by the Hands of Nature, they govern'd them by the Laws of Nature; and that wise Jurisprudence continued without Interruption, till Men became so wicked as to have need of written Laws, and of a King, who, tho' he had as much Power as the Father of a Family, had less Good-nature and Inclination to Pardon. Therefore it was Wickedness that introduc'd Sovereigns. If Men had always been just, they would always have been free, and wou'd have had no Necessity either for Governors, Judges, or Advocates. But since it is necessary that they shou'd be restrain'd by Fear, and since they are such vile Slaves to their Passions that they are only virtuous from the Apprehension of Punishment, they are bound for their own sakes to grant that Power to one or more, which they might have shared in the general among all. But he whom they own for their Sovereign is oblig'd to submit himself to the Laws, because he has no Power but what is by virtue of those very Laws by which Men are commanded to honour and obey those who are trusted with the Government of them.

When a Prince violates the Rules of Justice, what a pernicious Example does he not set to his Subjects? Does he not as good as tell them, 'That Faith, Oaths, and the most sacred Customs are Ties that may be broke with Safety? Follow my Example; be only wise and just where you cannot be criminal with Impunity.'

Mean time don't imagine, dear *Brito* that I have a Thought of limiting the sovereign Authority; I am willing that Justice should accompany it, in order to render it more respected. Is not Equity the Principle of real Grandeur? and where there is a wise and good King, who is the Father of his People, and governs them in Peace and Plenty, has not such a one more absolute Command of their Hearts than a Tyrant who is only serv'd out of Fear?

Perhaps thou wilt ask me, to what degree I am of Opinion that Subjects ought to be true to their Kings? I answer, 'Tis my Opinion that it is in no Case lawful for them to pass Sentence upon the Man, whom God has set over them for their Judge. 'Tis for that Almighty Being to punish bad Kings. The Subjects ought to pray to the Divinity to reform their Transgressions; but content with lifting up their Hands to Heaven, if their Prayers are not heard, they cannot rebel against the Lord's Anointed without enormous Guilt.

God makes use of wicked Sovereigns as of a Scourge like to a Pestilence or Famine. Tyrants are born for the Punishment of Mankind. We must submit to the Hand of the Lord, who punisheth or rewardeth us according as we deserve. 'Twas the Divine Wrath that made the *Caligula's* and the *Nero's* reign in *Rome*; and the Excesses to which those Monsters push'd things, were but a just Punishment of the Crimes of the *Romans*.

It wou'd be altogether as criminal an Absurdity to argue that a Man may rebel against his Prince, as to offer to excuse the ridiculous Conduct of the *Chinese* towards their Gods. While they expect any Good from them, they honour and respect them; but when they don't obtain their Desires, they treat them with the utmost Contempt. *What*  
*thou*

*thou Dog of a Spirit, say they to him sometimes, do we lodge thee in a very fine Temple, do we maintain thee in Clover, while thou art well gilt, well perfum'd, and dost thou refuse us the Favours which we desire of thee? Then they take a great Whip and lash the Idol for ten or twelve Days successively. If during that time they obtain their Request, they make several Excuses to it; Why, say they, Mr. Spirit, were you so obstinate; 'Tis true that we were a little importunate, but when all is said and done, were not you in the Wrong to be so hard-hearted a Deity? Why wou'd you subject your self to be beaten for the Purpose? However, since what is done can't be undone, let us think of it no more; you shall be re-ador'd, you shall be perfum'd over again, and you shall have wherewithall to make excellent Cheer, provided you forget what is past\*.*

A Chinese who had one of the most wilful and whimsical Idols, being vex'd at the needieſs Expence which he had laid out a long time upon it, and being unwilling to be the Dupe of so ill-natur'd a Deity, he prosecuted him, and summon'd him before the sovereign Council of *Pekin*. After several Sessions wherein the Bonzes made the best Defence that they could for the Idol, the Idolater carry'd his Cause. The Court in regard to the Plea of the Chinese, and in Justice to the same, condemn'd the Idol as quite useleſs in the Kingdom, to perpetual Banishment; his Temple was raz'd to the Ground, and the Bonzes who serv'd at the Altar of the Idol were severely punish'd; only they were allow'd to bring their Actions before other Spirits of the Province in order to make themselves Reparation for the Punishment which they had received for the sake of this †.

\* History of China, tom. ii. p. 223.

† Ibid. p. 224.

As ridiculous and impious as it would be to attempt to justify Actions so extravagant, it would be altogether as criminal to argue that the People may of their own accord do themselves Justice upon those to whom the Almighty has remitted the sovereign Power, and whom he has rendred accountable for it to himself alone.

The Laws are the Judges of Men; the Kings are the Executioners of those Laws; and God is the sole Master of sovereign Princes.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and let me hear from thee oftener.



## L E T T E R LVI.

From JACOB BRITO, at Venice, to  
AARON MONCECA, at Paris.

*VENICE*, my dear *Monceca*, is not like most of the Towns of *Italy*, which only furnish general Reflections upon the Manners of their Inhabitants. The meanest sort of People at *Venice*, the Women, the Priests, the Children, all the several Classes in this Country are worthy of Notice. In my former Letters I gave thee some Account of the Government in general; I shall now enter into a little more circumstantial Detail of the particular Customs.

The Noblemen when they appear in the Streets are always dress'd in a Robe of black Cloth, which in the Winter is lined with a grey Russet, and in the Summer with Ermin. Tho' Fur is not very seasonable in *Italy* in the Month of *August*, yet were they to drop down with the Heat they must not dress

dress otherwise; for Majesty, Grandeur, and Policy demanding it, they have nothing more to do than to yield Obedience. Nor is it in this Respect only that the *Venetian* Noblemen are Victims to their Rank; they are the same almost in every Action of their Lives. They are call'd by the Title of Excellency, and the way of saluting them is to kiss their Sleeve. The Elbow of this Sleeve is like a large Sack, and commonly serves as a Wallet to the *Venetian* Nobles when they go to the Market or the Shambles; so that in this Sleeve, which is the Residence of *Venetian* Grandeur, there is very often a Leg of Mutton and a dozen of Artichokes. This may appear strange to thee, but the Nobles go themselves to buy their Provisions, without being attended by any Domestic, and without being saluted by any, except such as are of their particular Acquaintance. They pretend to Wit, and to be excellent Politicians, but this is no more than what all the *Venetians* think of themselves; for in this Respect the very Gondoliers, who are no more than Watermen or Rowers, will not truckle an Inch to the first Nobleman; and they boast that no Undertaking is too difficult for them to succeed in.

'Tis true, that a Gondolier will carry on a Love-Intrigue better than any body, and that he brings it to a happy Issue, whatever Difficulty lies in the way. *He knows all the Turnings and Windings; he pretends to know the critical Minutes and the Backstairs; he has an Understanding with the Abigails; he furnishes the Rope-Ladders too if there be Occasion:* In short, he can give good Advice to the politest Monks, and might be admitted, if he were in *France*, to the secret Councils of the Convulsionaries. In order to have a perfect Idea of him, believe him to be as deceitful as a convulsionary Jansenist,

senist, as artful as a Jesuit, as confident as a Cordelier, as debauch'd as a Carmelite, and as hypocritical as a young Abbé that lies upon the Catch for a Benefice.

The Carnival is the Time when the Gondoliers have most Business, by reason of the great Number of Foreigners then at *Venice*; but as soon as Lent comes in, every body begins to dislodge; not only Travellers, but the Puppet-shews, Stage-players, Bears, Monsters, Curiosities, and Courtezans; that is to say, such as come for Devotion-fake from the neighbouring Countries: For they take care that those of *Venice* shall not desert, they being deem'd of too great Importance to the Welfare of the State. These also study Politics; for their Profession, tho' painful and fatiguing enough in other Respects, does not hinder them from applying to it; and some of 'em have really made a Figure in that Science. One in particular, who wou'd fain imitate *Solon*, and cast a Lustre upon the Profession of Ladies of Pleasure, caus'd a stately Chapel to be built out of the Money she had gain'd, and dedicated it to one *St. Magdalen the Egyptian*, that had been an infamous Harlot, just as that Legislator of the *Athenians* built a Temple of *Venus* out of the Money which had been receiv'd by the common Whores.

The Churches of this City are very beautiful; but the *Venetians* give them such Names, that one wou'd think their Religion had a Mixture of the *Jewish*. I know not whether 'tis their Indifference for the Court of *Rome*, that hinders them from invoking the Saints which it has canonized, but almost all their Temples are dedicated to our Patriarchs and our Prophets. A *Jew*, at his first Arrival in this Country, is very much surprized to hear their Churches call'd by the Names of *St. Job*, *St. Moses*,  
St.



St. *Samuel*, St. *Jeremiah*, St. *Daniel*, and St. *Zachary*. The Monks who serve at St. *Jeremiah's* affirm, that they have still a Tooth of that Prophet. I enquir'd very strictly whether they had not some Horn of our Legislator in the Temple of St. *Moses*, but I cou'd not find they had; nor whether in St. *Job's* they had preserv'd any of that honest Man's Scabs in some holy Phial. A Fryar told me in Confidence, that such Relics were very uncommon and dear, the Court of *Rome* selling them at an excessive Price: So that, in all appearance, there is nothing in the Temple of *Moses* but the Arms, Legs, and Jaws of *Nazarene* Saints; and no Relics of the antient *Israelites* in all *Venice*, but the single Tooth of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, which is kept in a Gold Case adorn'd with Diamonds: 'Tis so big, that it seems to be the Tooth of a Horse rather than of a Man; at which the Monk who shew'd it to me, told me, That I ought not to be surprized, because the antient Fathers were much taller than we are.

This monstrous Tooth put me in mind of another Relic, which a Friend of mine told me he had seen in a very fine Church at *Munich*: 'Tis a *Vertebra*, or Chine-bone, as big as that of an Elephant, or some other great Animal; and is held in singular Veneration throughout all *Bavaria*, as being one of the *Vertebrae* of the huge St. *Christopher*.

Tho' the Monks at *Venice*, as well as in other Countries, set a great Value upon their Relics, yet they seldom find any but among the meaner sort of People, that are ready to believe all the Miracles which they ascribe to them. Persons of Rank look upon these Things as Amusements, which are absolutely necessary for the Vulgar; nevertheless, if there should ever happen to be at *Venice*, any Relics

so troublesome as those of *St. Paris* are in *France*, I don't doubt but the Senate wou'd immediately order them to be thrown into the *Adriatic Gulph*, and very severely punish those that should offer to make them popular. The Republic having a Quarrel some time ago with one of the sovereign Pontiffs, the latter actually interdicted and suspended the whole Clergy of *Venice*. The Senate commanded the Priests to continue their Functions. Mean time some of the Fryars \* obey'd the Pontiff, but they were soon chastised for their Rebellion against the Orders of the State ; for they were banish'd out of the Republic, and tho' recall'd when the Senate and Pontiff were reconcil'd, 'twas only by Favour, and upon very hard Conditions.

I formerly acquainted thee, dear *Monceca*, in some of my Letters, how dangerous it is in this Country to cabal against the State, and with what Severity the bare Appearance of this Crime is punish'd. Great Rewards are given to those who inform against the Disturber of the public Tranquility, when the Intelligence is capable of being really useful. Informations and Letters, even from anonymous Hands, are attended to ; tho' 'tis true they make a prudent cautious Use of such Intelligence. There are in the Piazzas of *St. Mark's Palace*, and in several Parts of its Galleries, the Muzzles of certain Animals, in the Mouths of which any Person may put Letters, as they do Money into a Box at Church for the Poor, with such Informations as they think fit to give to the Inquisitors of the State. This is what they call *Denuntie Secrete*, i. e. Secret Information. But for all this, don't imagine, dear *Monceca*, that there's any great Danger.

\* The Jesuits and the Capuchin Fryars.

from such anonymous Information, and that it puts any Man in the Power of his Enemy. The Judges who compose the State Inquisition, are so candid and prudent, that no body need to fear Punishment if he is not really guilty. We don't find any Country in the World, where Mankind is so free as at *Venice*. The *Armenians*, *Jews*, *Greeks*, have the public Exercise of their Ceremonies. All the other Religions are likewise tolerated; but they don't pretend to know that there are any such Assemblies, they being held in such a prudent Manner, that the Senate has no Reason at all to complain of them. The very Monks here have full Freedom; they put on the Mask when they please at the Carnival, keep a Concubine, sing at the Theatres, and, in short, do what they list, provided their Debauchery or Devotion does not interfere with the Affairs of State. There's no Similitude between the Maxims of *Venice* and *Rome*, but in the Protection granted in both Cities to the Courtezans; there being no People that less resemble each other, especially as to Matters of Superstition, and the Authority of the Monks.

As to the Authority of the Monks, they tell a very comical Story here, which lately happen'd at *Messina*. The Consul of *Holland* residing at that Place, had a very pretty Daughter of sixteen or seventeen Years of Age, whom the Devotees took it into their Heads to make a Saint, saying, They could not bear the Thought that so lovely a Creature should ever fall a Prey to the Devils. To put her into the right Path, and to open the Way for her to Heaven, they resolv'd to persuade her to quit her Parents; and, in order to render that Action the more meritorious, to rob them at the same Time. They quoted five or six *Spanish* Divines to her, who gave leave to a Daughter to rob her Father when  
he

he was a Protestant, and when she left him to retire to a Monastery. The young Woman, after some Consideration, being convinc'd of the Piety and Sanctity of the Robbery, only wanted an Opportunity to put it in Execution. Two reverend Capuchin Fathers lent her their Assistance; they went often to the Collection that was made at the Consul's House, who gave them Alms, very far from imagining what a Trick they intended to put upon him. Mean time the Disciples of St. *Francis* carry'd off some Apparel, or other Things of the young Catechumen's every Day; and for this purpose the large Wallets in the Sleeves of their Robes were of very great Service. At last, when they had pack'd up all the Clothes, the new Convert stole a Purse full of Pieces of Gold, and elop'd. 'Twas not long ere her Parents heard of her. No one can express their Surprize, when they knew their Daughter's Project, and the Cause of her Escape; but their only Remedy was Patience.

The new Saint was admitted a Nun; and she made a Vow never to entertain a Love-Passion, but to be obedient to the Humours of a fantastical old Shrew, and to keep no Money, but to give it all to the Fryars\*.

For near three Years together the whole Talk at *Messina* was about this Holy Convert; a Collection had been already made, which amounted to near an hundred thousand Crowns, the Sum necessary for canonizing her after Death. Many a Fryar, when in the Pulpit, used her Conversion as a Pretence to declaim against all the *Nazarene* Protestants: They foretold the entire Ruin of *England* and *Holland*; and actually bestow'd some Compliments and Rhetoric

\* The three Vows of the Nuns, Chastity, Obedience, and Poverty.

rical Flourishes on the Pretender, assuring him that he wou'd be plac'd on the Throne as soon as God had put all the *English* to Death, as a Punishment for their Rebellion; so that it wou'd be then in his Power to carry over as many Monks with him as he pleas'd, who would also be of great Use to re-people the Country.

While this blessed Nun was the Talk of all *Sicily*, while every Mother was quoting her for an Example to her Daughter, when they were ready as it were to cut out her old Clothes into Scapularies and Relics, she vanish'd all on a sudden. It was thought at first that she was conceal'd from human Sight by a Miracle, while she was conversing with *St. Rose* or *St. Clara*; but since she did not appear again, it was the Opinion of an able Divine, that as she had for some time past no more Grace than what was barely sufficient, she had play'd some Frolic, that sort of sufficient Grace not always sufficing; and that they must wait for a Motion of efficacious Grace to produce her Return. Tho' the Divine seem'd to talk rationally, the Inquisition thought his Reasoning dangerous, and he had like to have been severely punish'd for a Jansenist. As for the fair Saint, she return'd to *Holland* in a *Rotterdam* Vessel; and, in order to make use of efficacious Grace, she obey'd the first Commandment of God, and begg'd Pardon of her Family for her Disobedience. The Bishop being mortify'd and touch'd to the Quick, when he heard that one of his Ewe-Lambs was stray'd, alarm'd the whole City of *Messina*; and it was as much as the Governor himself could do, with all his Authority, to protect the Consul's Person; for his House was search'd all over, and his Domestics examin'd. But after a great deal of Enquiry, the Bishop was forc'd to arm himself with Patience, and to make himself as easy at the

Elope-

Elopement of his Nun, as the Consul was for the Rape of his Daughter.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and let me hear from thee.



## L E T T E R LVII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to JACOB BRITO, at Venice.*

**T**H Y Letters upon the Manners and Customs of the *Venetians*, gave me a real Pleasure. I admire their Wisdom in setting such narrow Limits to the Ambition and Fanaticism of the Monks ; but the Rule which I think the most rational of all, is that which exempts such Books and Writings as are printed and publish'd in the Dominions of the Republic, from the Cognizance of any of the Ecclesiastical Tribunals whatever. That's a sure Method to keep the People always in a State of Independancy, and to give them an Aversion to Superstition.

The Ideas of the most illustrious Men become common to every private Man, and the Learned do not lose their Time in endeavouring to perfect the Understanding of all their Fellow-Citizens, when the Liberty of Instructing is left to the one, and that of Improving to the other. The Ambition of the Monks, and their Care to suppress every thing that might be pleaded against them, have depriv'd us of a thousand Master-pieces. How many excellent Books were either entirely suppress'd or castrated by the Bigots, before Printing was invented !

vented! We ought to think ourselves happy that this curious Art has put a Check to their Knavery. Had Books been ever so little a-while in their power, we should scarce perhaps have had any other Historians or Authors, than some miserable *Nazarene* Scribblers. The *Conformities of St. Francis to Jesus Christ*, and the *Annals* of some Monks wou'd have taken the Place of *Titus Livy* and *Sallust*: And if a sovereign Pontiff cou'd have had his Will, that first-rate Writer, the Prince and Monarch of Historians, wou'd have been intirely suppress'd. That Pontiff, nam'd *Gregory* \*, condemn'd this Work to the Flames. What a Misfortune wou'd it have been to Mankind, dear *Brito*, if this *Gregory's* Cotemporaries had been as mad as he was! Malice and Hypocrisy are the most mortal Enemies of Learning, which enrages them because it takes off their Mask, and shews their Deformity.

When Mankind seem'd to have forgot the Use of their natural Reason, the Monks and the Priests, who were the only Persons that copied the Manuscripts, sold them at an excessive Price, and took care to strike out every thing that might give any Light into their Frauds. They wou'd undoubtedly have wholly suppress'd certain Books if we had not prevented them: For being scatter'd thro' all *Greece* and *Italy*, we had those MSS. as well as they; and it being impossible to hide them intirely, they contented themselves with taking out whole Pieces, and substituting others sometimes in their room. We even to this time see daily Examples of these Monkish Superstitions; one half of the Works of *Horace*, *Juvenal*, *Ovid*, &c. is wanting in the Editions which have been publish'd

\* *Gregory I. surnamed the Great.*

by the Monks: And if several others did not preserve those Master-pieces entire, we shou'd quickly lose those last Treasures of Antiquity for good and all.

I own to thee, dear *Brito*, that I can't imagine how *Lucretius* happen'd to come down to us intire; I don't know who were the Transcribers that were so exact in preserving him. If they were the Monks that we are oblig'd to for it, I heartily forgive them for one Quarter of their Knaveries; not that I approve of that Poet's pernicious Sentiments concerning the Deity; for, dear *Brito*, may those perish who have not the profoundest Veneration for the Divine Being: But the rest of his Work is so compleat, so beautiful, and so diversify'd, that it would have been a sad thing to have been depriv'd of it intirely.

By chance the Works of *Petronius* are also transmitted to us almost entire. We have likewise recover'd some other Fragments of several Authors; and one day perhaps we may be so happy as to discover *Tacitus* and *Titus Livy*, without any Chasms, and in their Perfection. 'Tis assur'd by many People, that the Grand Signior has this last Historian compleat in his Library. I have heard this Fact affirm'd as true by a great many People, but I can assure thee that I know the contrary, and can speak of it with a great deal of Certainty.

*Lewis XIV*, always vigilant to promote his own Glory, was willing that the World should be oblig'd to him for all the Works of *Titus Livy*, if it is true that they cou'd be come at; and he sent to M. *de Feriol*, his Ambassador at the Porte, to offer any Money for the *Titus Livy* which was said to be in the Library of the Seraglio. M. *de Feriol* apply'd to 'the Vizier, who spoke about it to the Grand Signior. The latter made some Scruple, for  
they



they thought then at the Porte that it was not proper for the MS. to be compar'd and examin'd whether it was more compleat than the Work we have. *M. de Feriol* was not discourag'd at the Miscarriage of the first Attempt, but got somebody to speak to the Librarian, and offer'd him a Hundred thousand Crowns if he would only be pleased to let him have the MS. for a Time, and give Leave for the transcribing of such Passages as were wanting in the printed Copies of that Historian; which done, the Book might have been replac'd in the Library, and the Passages stole out not perceiv'd. This Proposal prodigiously pleased the Librarian, who thought a Hundred thousand Crowns worth his Acceptance, and promis'd to deliver the Book; but the Cream of the Jest was, that after a good deal of Search, there was no such MS. to be found. So far was a *Titus Livy* from being found intire among the Grand Signior's Books, that there was not so much as one of the Copies to be found which we have of that Author, or at least if there was, the Librarian did not think proper to declare it. Being sorry that he did not touch the Hundred thousand Crowns, he made Answer that after a Search he did not find what was wanted. I know that it may be supposed that the Librarian after reflecting upon the Hazard which he ran, might alter his Opinion. This indeed is not absolutely impossible; but I know on the other hand that an Hundred thousand Crowns must be an extraordinary Temptation to a *Turk*, who is used to run all Risques for Money.

What is wanting of this Historian is so much regretted in *France*, that I am sure Two hundred thousand Crowns would not be grudg'd there for a compleat Copy of him, and the Money wou'd easily come in again, by Subscriptions from several Gen-

tlemen of the Kingdom, who would be willing to have Copies of the same.

Would'st thou think, dear *Brito*, that in a Country where good Authors are so much valu'd, the Monks have nevertheless found means to establish a sort of Inquisition against Bookselling? All Books by which they think themselves hurt, are proscrib'd and prohibited under grievous Penalties. They enjoin Penance in the Confession-Chairs upon those who read them, and stir up the Magistrates to join with them. It seems as if it were more dangerous barely to write in a Book that a Monk is commonly a Knave, than to publish a System of Atheism, or any Work *contra bonos mores*. But for all the Bustle they make, as soon as a Book is printed in any Part of *Europe*, if it be good for any thing it is immediately sold at *Paris*, and sooner too than in any other Part of *Europe*. The Prohibitions, issued to hinder the Sale of them, do but raise the Price and promote the Vend of them to a very great Degree; for the Hawkers take care to furnish the Beaux, the Lawyers and the Courtiers with 'em; the very Ladies are so fond of reading prohibited Books, that they have them brought to their Toilets as Appurtenances to their Dressing; and while the Milliner is employ'd in *erecting the gallant Edifice of their Hair*, some well-beloved Friend, fine Gentleman, or a Lover, reads certain Pages with an audible Voice.

Thou wilt perhaps be curious to know the principal Motive of the Persecution against Books, and which are those that are most severely proscrib'd. Tho' all Pieces that have a Tendency to cure the People of Superstition are generally prohibited, yet there is not so much Care taken to hinder the Sale of them, as of those which favour Jansenism or Molinism;

linism ; and tho' they can no more stop the Vend of the latter than of the former, yet they do what they can to suppress them. I own, dear *Brito*, that it would be for the public Service that those Works were suppress'd, which are commonly but a Series of Impostures, Calumnies, and gross Railing. The Jansenist Authors especially are famous for Disputes of this kind, for when Arguments fail them, they supply the want thereof with Invective. They give extravagant Pay to a Man who twice a Week publishes a printed \* Sheet throughout *Europe*, in which he is obliged to abuse every Man who does not believe that the Water in which a Piece of St. *Paris's* Slippers has been boil'd, is a Cure for all sorts of Distempers.

I have often mention'd the Molinists and the Jansenists to thee, but never told thee that 'tis impossible to live in this Country, without espousing either the one or the other. Such is the Spirit of Caballing that prevails at *Paris*, that were a Man of *Spinoza's* Sect he cannot be neuter. The Jansenists and the Molinists refuse none ; they don't oblige such as are admitted into their Body, to make Profession of their Faith at Entrance, and only demand that they swear a mortal Hatred to their Adversaries. Notwithstanding the Necessity there is for a Man to list himself under one of the two Standards, I must tell thee, dear *Brito*, that I have thought my self oblig'd to look with very great Indifference on the Disputes of a Religion of which I think the Principles bad. Nevertheless, tho' 'tis well known that I am a *Jew* born at *Constantinople*, unknown to the Jesuits, that I am a Man of no Ambition, and take no Pleasure but in the Study of Philosophy, yet two

\* *The Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques.*

or three Persons who are my familiar Acquaintance here, have taken it into their Heads that I am a Molinist. *We see*, they often say, *your Hatred of St. Paris: You openly condemn his Miracles: The Convulsionaries, in your Opinion, are Fanatics that ought to be sent to the Gallies. The Perspiration*, say you, *which would arise from the Fatigue, from the Fastinado, and from the painful Exercise of rowing, might purge those sharp Humours, which floating in their Blood occasion their Phrenzy. You would fain see the Abbé Becheran and the Chevalier Follard metamorphos'd into Galley-Slaves, recover their Reason by a tedious Penance exercised in all the Parts of the Mediterranean.* What, reply'd I, *is the wishing that Imposture may be punish'd the same thing as to wish that Hatred and Ambition may be deify'd?* For, dear Brito, this is the true Picture of the Jansenists and the Molinists. The former are dangerous Impostors; The latter are devour'd by a Lust for Dominion, and a Thirst for Revenge. They are all equally to be dreaded; but their Faults are different.

The Jansenist is ill-natur'd, and a Bigot from his Cradle, and sucks the Spirit of Rebellion and Sedition with his Mother's Milk. The first Words which he learns to speak are Invectives and Scandal against the Pontiffs; and the older he grows the more he hates them. Under the external Appearance of mistaken Piety, he conceals a base and dangerous Mind. Being a wicked *Nazarene*, a rebellious Subject, a perfidious Friend, a Parent without Friendship, three Words which he is eternally repeating, serve for a specious Pretext to all his Crimes. *The Liberties of the Gallican Church* is the Cabalistical Cant of the Jansenists Sect. There are no odious Sins which those Words don't cancel, and which they don't also authorize.

The ambitious Molinist wants to command wherever he comes. Like the high Winds he overturns whatever makes Resistance, and spares whatever yields to him. He banishes the haughty Jansenist by a Letter de Cachet. In vain is he supported by the City and the Provinces; for like the Oak, whose deep Roots cannot save it from being overthrown by a Storm, he perishes; while the Libertine, the Atheist, and the Debauchee, which like feeble Reeds bend and seem to yield, are safe, and perfectly tranquil. 'Tis not the Crime nor the Criminal which the Molinist hates, but the Rival of his Greatness, or what may become such. No Person is innocent in his sight, as soon as he is in a Capacity of being hurtful to him. Too much Learning and Virtue attract his Hatred. He is for fewer good Qualities, and more Obedience. He is good-natur'd, sincere, polite, complaisant, and a downright honest Man when alone; but when he acts in concert with his Brethren, he is proud, haughty, insupportable, a Tyrant and a Persecutor. One half of the Misfortunes of this Kingdom is owing to the Ambition of those who are now call'd *Molinists*. They formerly persecuted the *Nazarenes*, to whom *France* was oblig'd for her Glory\*; for they had plac'd the greatest King in the Universe upon her Throne, but Wickedness pluck'd him from it, and the Consequence of that Wickedness was the Ruin of that Monarch's Benefactors.

Thou perceivest, dear *Bruto*, the Judgment that ought to be form'd of the Sects of the Jansenists and Molinists. The Members of the first are dangerous, and those of the second are no less so, the very Moment that they act in common and

\* The Protestants.

in a Body. But after all, thou wilt conceive a false Notion of the *French*, if thou dost imagine, that either those who are here call'd *Molinists*, or those who are call'd *Janfenists*, are much disturb'd at those Cabals. These Names are assum'd here, as I told thee, because 'tis the Fashion to declare either for the one Party or the other. Therefore when I talk to thee of the *Molinists* and the *Janfenists*, I only mean them who are at the head of those Sects, who soment Division in the State, and abuse the Goodness, Lenity and Clemency of their Prince. If ever a Prince is pardonable for too much Severity, 'tis when such Severity tends to make his Subjects perfectly easy. If in the Beginning of those Troubles the *Janfenists* had been severely punish'd for their Restlessness, and the *Molinists* had been check'd in their Ambition, every Man might have thought what he pleas'd both of *Janfenius* and *Molina*; and perhaps by this time neither of them wou'd have been remember'd.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and go on to prosper.



## L E T T E R LVIII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Smyrna,  
formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

I Was glad, dear *Isaac*, to hear of thy Arrival at *Smyrna*, where, thanks be to the God of our Fathers, thou art safe from those Dangers to which thy Change of Religion did expose thee. As soon as thou art arriv'd at *Cairo*, let me hear from thee, and make me perfectly easy in my Mind.

The

The Particulars which thou gavest me of the Impostor *Sabbathai* have confirm'd me in the Opinion, that I ought to place no Confidence in, and give no Credit to, things which I don't know from full Evidence. An old Merchant of *Provence* to whom I shew'd thy Letter, and who in his Youth spent several Years at *Smyrna* told me upon the mention of *Sabbathai*, a very pleasant Adventure, which happen'd to a couple of *Englishmen* who were settled at *Constantinople*. They had advanc'd considerable Sums to certain *Jews*, and were afraid they should lose their Money. While they were uneasy to have it again, Curiosity on the one hand, and Interest on the other, determin'd them to carry their Complaint to *Sabbathai Sevi* when he was a Prisoner in the Castle of the *Dardanelles*. The Impostor heard them with great Gravity and Goodnature, and by the following Letter order'd the *Jews* to pay them.

### LETTER,

*To you of the Jewish Nation, who wait the coming of the Messiah, and the Salvation of Israel, Peace without end.*

‘ I Am inform'd that you owe Money to several *English* Gentlemen: We think it but just to order you to pay your Debts; which if you refuse to do, and are disobedient to us in this Instance, know that you shall not enter with me into my Kingdom.’

The *Englishmen* thank'd *Sabbathai Sevi* in Terms of great Respect, and taking Advantage of his Imposture, and the *Jews* Weakness, they had their Money again.

There happen'd another comic Scene to *Sabbathai Sevi* during his Imprisonment, which prov'd afterwards his intire Ruin, and discover'd his Knavery. One *Nehemiah Cohen* a Jew, that understood the *Hebrew*, *Syriac*, and *Chaldæan* Languages; and was as well vers'd in the Cabala of the Rabbies as *Sabbathai* himself, was covetous of a Share in the Reputation of that Impostor, and therefore desir'd a Conference with him. Their Conversation was at first very tranquil, but after having tried in vain to settle Matters on such a footing as might be agreeable to both, they grew warm and fell into a violent Passion. *Is it not true*, said *Cohen*, *that according to the Scriptures there are to be two Messiahs; the first poor, despised, a Preacher of the Law, a Servant of the second; and his Forerunner; the second, rich, powerful, and victorious? I am content*, continued he, *to be Ben-Ephraim, or the poor Messiah. What Prejudice is this to your Glory? Will not you be as much Messiah the Conqueror?* After many Debates, *Sabbathai Sevi* consented that *Cohen* should be the poor *Messiah*; and their Dispute was just at an end, when *Cohen* thought fit to reproach *Sabbathai Sevi* for having been too hasty in giving himself out to be the powerful *Messiah*, before he the poor *Messiah* that was to be his Forerunner, had made himself known to the World. *Sabbathai* took it amiss that *Cohen* should be so forward as to criticise his Conduct. *I cashier you*, said he to him, *you are not, and never shall be Ben-Ephraim. And I*, reply'd *Cohen*, *cashier you in my turn, and promise you that I will hinder you from being own'd as Ben-David.* Then the Dispute grew hot between these two Impostors, and from hard Words they proceeded to Blows. The *Turks* who had the Guard of *Sabbathai Sevi*, and who had heard this pleasant Conversation by listening



listening at the Door of his Prison, ran and separated the Combatants. *Cohen* took a quick Revenge; for he told the chief Ministers at the Porte, that *Sabbathai Sevi* gain'd Ground daily upon the Affections of the *Jews*, who had the same Esteem for him as ever, notwithstanding his Knavery and Imposture. We have often had Monsters among us, who by abusing the Credulity of their Brethren, in order to satisfy their Ambition or their Avarice, have assum'd the Title of *Deliverer of the Jewish Nation*, and the august Name of the *Messiah*.

In the Reign of the Emperor *Theodosius* the Younger, there was a *Jew* in *Candia* who did our Nation much more Mischief than this vile Impostor *Sabbathai*. This *Jew* call'd himself *Moses*, and he affirm'd that he was the very Prophet *Moses* who conducted the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, and rescued them from the *Egyptian* Bondage. He spent a whole Year from Place to Place in the Island of *Candia*, where he preach'd in all the Synagogues, and promis'd all the *Jews*, of whom there were great Numbers in that Island, to carry them over Sea without a Ship, and to lead them into the very Heart of *Judaea*, without so much as wetting their Feet. The Day was actually fix'd for their setting out, when being follow'd by a vast Multitude of People, he went to a very high Beach, and commanded those that were foremost, to cast themselves into the Sea as soon as they came to the Brink of it, without any Fear, assuring them that they would run no Danger. The silly People deluded by this Villain, actually threw themselves headlong into the Sea, where they had been justly punish'd for their Credulity, if some Fishermen that happen'd to be there at the Time, had not sav'd them from the Waves.

and hinder'd those that came upon the Heels of the others from following their Example.

Our Nation is not the only one, dear *Isaac*, that has been abused by Impostors. Where is the Kingdom, where the Religion that has not been productive of Seducers? The *Nazarenes* ought not to upbraid us with our false *Messiahs*: Have not they People among them every Day, who under the Presence of Religion, and the Veil of Piety, plunge them into the wildest Errors? *Sabbathai Sevi* never made so much Impression upon the Minds of the *Jews*, as *St. Paris* has done upon the *French*. No *Israelite* was ever so much infatuated and blinded, as to mistake the Fits of Phrenzy for the visible Marks of the Grace of God, employing a Parcel of Madmen to declare his Holy Will. We have sometimes plac'd our Belief in Men that promis'd us Things that were tempting; and such Pleasure has their Doctrine given us that we have even help'd to deceive our selves. But they who seduce the *Nazarenes*, preach nothing to them but Troubles and Calamities; all the Convulsionaries at *Paris* foretell the End of the World, the dethronings of the Pontiffs, the Destruction of States: So that a Man must have a strong Bias to Fanaticism, to chuse such Prophets for his Guides.

I know, dear *Isaac*, that every thing that is extraordinary strikes and captivates the Minds of the People; tho' the *Nazarene* Popish Countries are more subject to Superstition than others. But in *England* and *Holland* you scarce meet with any that are possess'd; because the Devils take few Walks in those Countries. For as in those Dominions no Friar can shew in public what Power his Holiness gives him over Hell, *Belzebub* and *Astaroth* don't trade thither in Company, or at least no body talks of 'em.

Some

Some days ago I receiv'd a Letter from the *Hague* with an account that a Tradesman of that Place complain'd of a Spirit which came in the Night-time, and tore all his Clothes and Furniture to pieces. The common People, who are always credulous, readily believ'd it, and crouded to the Tradesman's House, who shew'd them some of the pieces of Stuff and Linnen that had been cut and torn off. He told a thousand Stories more surprizing than all this of the Mischievousness of this Spirit. The High Bailiff, inform'd of the Affair, order'd that nothing more shou'd be laid in the Spirit's way to be torn, and enjoin'd the Tradesman to talk no more of the Imp; nay he gave the latter to understand that he shou'd be answerable for the Folly of the former. Since that Time the Spirit has decamp'd, and the Tradesman now lays the Blame upon the Rats, of what he imputed at first to this invisible Substance.

The *Nazarene* Papists pretend, that this Devil was one of the best-natur'd sort, or else all the Authority of the Magistrates wou'd not have banish'd him. They say there are a sort of Spirits very easy to be laid; and that, without having recourse to the Ritual, or Book of Ceremonies, an Air of *Quinault's* Opera is of as much avail as an Exorcism of the Church. Upon this Occasion they quote one *Ignatius Loyola*, who, in order to drive the Devil out of the Body of a Woman that was possess'd, and desir'd his Help, made use of that Verse of *Virgil*,

*Speluncam Dido Dux & Trojanus eandem.*

In the same Cave the *Trojan* Chief  
And *Dido* shelter took.

He had scarce pronounc'd these Words, but the Woman was thrown flat upon the Ground, and the Devil left her, begging heartily that he might not be shut up in the infernal Cave. He obtain'd leave to go wherever he pleas'd, provided he never possess'd any Man more\*.

You must own, dear *Isaac*, that this is a pleasant way of driving out Devils. If one single Verse of *Virgil* has the Virtue to banish a Dæmon, I don't doubt but were that Poet to recite his whole *Æneid*, it wou'd be powerful enough to drive them all out of Hell, and to purge it in short from their detestable Race. He wou'd thereby do great Service to the Authors, his Comrades, and especially to *Horace*, *Catullus*, *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Petronius*, who being voluptuous by Nature, and brought up in good Company, cannot but think that of the Devils a little too obstreperous.

Now I am mentioning good Authors, a Hawker brought me a new Book †, which I have read with a great deal of Pleasure : 'Tis a Translation of four Epistles in Verse, written by the illustrious *Pope*, the best Poet of *England*. The Original is good, and so is the Translation; for tho' the latter be in Prose, yet the Translator has therein preserv'd the Spirit and Beauty of the *English* Verses. The Subject of these Epistles is important, for they all treat of Metaphysical Matters, which are explain'd in a clear and concise manner.

I. The first treats of the Nature and State of Man with regard to the Universe. The Author therein proves that Man is not an imperfect Being, that he is proportion'd to the Place and Rank

\* *Joannes Christianus Fromman de Fascinatione, lib. iii. part. ix. cap. iv. num. xv. p. 949.*

† *Essay on Man*, by Mr. *Pope*.

which he holds in the Creation, and to the Ends and Relations which are known to him. He founds the present Happiness of Human Beings partly upon the Ignorance of future Events, and partly upon the Hopes of future Happiness, and condemns their unjust Complaints against Providence as a great Crime.

II. The second teaches Man to know his Nature and Condition consider'd with regard to himself, It opens the Spring and Cause of all our Actions, of which Self-Love and Reason are the two Principles, and shews how much our Knowledge is circumscrib'd.

Superior Beings, *says the Poet*, when of late they  
saw

A mortal Man unfold all Nature's Law,  
Admir'd such Wisdom in an earthly Shape,  
And shew'd a *Newton*, as we shew an *Ape*.

I know not, dear *Isaac*, whether this Sentiment be as taking with you, as it is with me; but I think there is something in it that is grand, sublime, and yet natural. 'Tis also well express'd in the *French*.

III. What follows is a Description proper for chastising the Pride of Man; and I think that all good Judges cannot but admire it.

Has God, thou Fool! work'd solely for thy Good;  
Thy Joy, thy Pastime, thy Attire, thy Food?  
Who for thy Table feeds the wanton Fawn,  
For him as kindly spreads the flow'ry Lawn..  
Is it for Thee the Lark ascends and sings?  
Joy tunes his Voice, Joy elevates his Wings:  
Is it for thee the Linnet pours his Throat?  
Loves of his own, and Raptures swell the Note.  
The bounding Steed you pompously bestride,  
Shares with his Lord the Pleasure and the Pride.

Is Thine alone the Seed that strows the Plain?  
 The Birds of Heav'n shall vindicate their Grain.  
 Thine the full Harvest of the Golden Year?  
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving Steer.

There, dear *Isaac*, you have one of the finest Pieces in Poetry. What different Images, what a Variety, what Stretch of Imagination! The Poet offers all Nature to our Sight; and the Philosopher demonstrates to us, that we have no more Share in it than the other Creatures. Don't we see, in short, as soon as we divest ourselves of our Prejudices, that nothing was made intirely either for us, or the others? The Passage I have just now quoted is in the third Epistle, wherein the Author examines the Nature and Condition of Man with regard to Society, gives a Detail of the several Centuries and Ages of the World, and shews the Origin of the first Societies since the Creation, which were form'd by Instinct, and cemented by Reason.

IV. The last of these four Epistles treats of that Happiness which Men court with so much Eagerness. The Poet proves that all may be happy in what state soever Heaven has plac'd them; and that in order to attain to Felicity and Tranquility, there is nothing wanting but Good Sense in the Mind, and Sincerity in the Heart. The Poet says,

Ask of the Learn'd the Way, the Learn'd are blind;  
 This bids to serve, and that to shun Mankind:  
 Some place the Bliss in Action, some in Ease;  
 Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these.  
 Who thus define it, say they, more or less  
 Than this, that Happiness is Happiness?  
 One grants his Pleasure is but Rest from Pain,  
 One doubts of all, one owns even Virtue vain.

Thus,

Thus, dear *Isaac*, thou hast the true Picture of our Blindness. We dispute about the Definition of what is capable of making us happy ; we ramble a great way about, in quest of what we have already in our own Reach, *Virtue, Health, Neccessaries.* There's true Happiness ; whoever enjoys those three things, is happy in Perfection ; but as the two latter are not absolutely at our Command, God has given a Power to the first, to comfort us for the Loss and Deprivation of the other two. So that, dear *Isaac*, a Man is never extremely unhappy, so long as he is virtuous. Wisdom does not produce the ridiculous Effects which the Stoics ascribed to it, but 'tis a sweet Comforter, that takes off very much of the Bitterness of all our Anxieties.

Farewell, my dear *Isaac*, and let me hear from thee speedily.



## LETTER LIX.

From JACOB BRITO, at Venice, to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.

THIS, in all probability, is the last Letter I shall write to thee from *Venice* ; for I reckon to set out the latter-end of this Week for *Ravenna*, and from thence to proceed afterwards to *Naples*. In my Way I shall pass through *Loretto*, and see that Church so much boasted of by the *Nazarenes*, and so much frequented by their Pilgrims. The *Roman* Pontiff's have granted so many Indulgences to those who go to visit this Temple, that by this means they can deliver

deliver the Souls of all their Ancestors out of Purgatory.

The Courtezans of *Venice*, whose Occupations will not permit them to go in a Pilgrimage to *Loretto*, make use of another Expedient for the Relief of the Dead. They make Choice of one Day in the Week, which they devote to the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory: That Day they arm themselves with an austere Countenance, putting off Sports and Merriments till the next; every thing in their House has the Face of Melancholy, and as their Goodwill alone is not sufficient to engage the Monks to pray to God, they say very seriously to such Gallants as come to their Houses, *Sir, you will be so good as to pay me more than usual to-day, because what I do is for the Souls in Purgatory.* Then they produce several Acquittances for Prayers, which are hung on a File by their Bed-side, to prove that they don't cheat, and that the Money they have receiv'd is laid out in Prayers and pious Foundations. After this Prelude is over, they work to some purpose for the Salvation of Souls. When they have not Custom enough upon the Days set apart for such a good Work, they endeavour to obtain some Prayers for the Souls of their Kindred *gratis*. And indeed those whom they employ in this Office, having a reciprocal need of their Assistance, they are not barbarous to one another, but easily compound the Matter in such a way that they have no need to disburse any thing.

Thou wilt think the Zeal and Devotion of these Courtezans extraordinary, but at *Venice* Debauchery is reconcil'd to Religion in People of all Ranks: There's scarce a Monk, a Priest, Abbé, or my Lord, but keeps a Mistress. When a Man is not rich enough to keep a kind Lais to himself, he clubs  
with



with some Friend; and if the Purse of both is not sufficient, they take in a Third for a Partner. In all amorous Contracts, the Damself takes care to reserve one Day of the Week to herself, in honour of some Saint.

In this Country there are a great many Mothers who prostitute their own Daughters from a Principle of Conscience, saying, they do it to furnish them with an Opportunity of getting Money, that they may have wherewithal to turn Nuns. Is not that, dear *Monceca*, a pleasant way of becoming Virgins? The old *Romans* never thought of making their Vestal Dames perform a Noviciate in the Street *Saburra*: Nor is the Chastity of the *Venetian* Nuns, Proof against the strongest Attacks; their Moral has nothing in it that is rigid; they are more happy and free than many other Women that are of Quality; they receive what Visitors they please in their Parlour, and their Conversation has nothing in it that's austere; they hear the Monks when they have not better Business; yet they don't resolve upon it till they are reduc'd to the last Extremity, and when they have absolutely lost all Hopes of getting better Cullies. Not but there are Fryars at *Venice*, whose fresh Complexion and jocund Airs, are capable of producing some tender Motion in a young Woman's Heart; but the Fate of the Monks seems, upon the whole, to be more unhappy at *Venice* than in the other Cities of *Italy*; however, if they are not so much esteem'd there, they have as much, and more Liberty. During the Carnival, they enjoy all the Pleasures of it; go to the Opera, and even sing there, or play upon the Instruments in the Orchestre, whenever the Fancy takes them. They go to the *Ridottos* (Places where they play at the famous  
Game

Game of *Pharo*) at which they bet and lose the Church's Money, or their own. Nothing that is lawful for the most resolute Soldier to do, is disparaging to Monkish Decency at this Place, and the Priests themselves are Examples of the most infamous Debauchery. The Mistresses of the principal Clergy are proud of their Gallants, are pleased that the Public shou'd know them, and are as indiscreet in their Intrigues as the *French Fops* are in boasting of the Ladies Favours.

As I was going one Day through a Street near the Square of *St. Mark*, I saw a young Woman at a Window, whom I thought so pretty, that I ask'd a *Venetian* of my Acquaintance who she was? *She is*, said he, *la gentil Donna de l'Eminentissimo Patriarcha di Venetia. i. e.* The charming Mistress of his Eminency the Patriarch of *Venice*. I made, as thou must well imagine, dear *Monceca*, a profound Obeisance to Madam the Patriarchess. About thirty Steps from thence, I also perceiv'd another very amiable Lady, and asking her Name likewise, said my Friend, *Il primo Canonico della Chiesa di San Marco e Schiavo de la sua Bellezza. i. e.* The chief Canon of *St. Mark's Church* is a Slave to her Charms. Another Bow thou may'st be sure I paid to the Mistress of the chief Canon of *St. Mark*. I believ'd I shou'd have no more Occasion to ask a third Question, but I saw another Woman, whom I thought so perfect a Beauty, that I could not help repeating the Question; *Is this too*, said I, *the Property of the Church?* *You are not mistaken*, said he; *Questa bellissima Donna é la Puttana del Premicerio. i. e.* This pretty Lady is the Whore of the Dean of *St. Mark's*. *But whence comes it*, said I to my Friend, *that all the Women of this Street are fallen to the Share of the Clergy?* 'Tis, reply'd he, *because they live almost*

*almost all hereabouts, and are very glad to be near what they love. Those Ladies whom you see, have great Interest with the Clergy, insomuch that all the young Priests make their Court to them with very great Assiduity.*

It happen'd some time ago, that the Patriarch's Mistress, whom we just now saw, had a Quarrel with the Mistress of the Legate of the sovereign Pontiff, which was an Affair wherein all the Clergy were engag'd and divided. The Fryars took part with the Legate, and the secular Priests with the Patriarch. These two illustrious Lovers enter'd into the Quarrel of their Concubines with very great Warmth; and that the Public might not know the Ground of their Hatred, they pleaded some Punctilios of Honour for a Pretext, which gave them a Handle to thwart each other upon all Occasions. The Senate, which hated those Discussions, and was very studious to keep up Peace and Union in the Republic, signify'd to the Court of *Rome*, that they would do well to send another Legate to *Venice*, which was accordingly comply'd with. The old Legate being recall'd, took Signiora *Clara* along with him, and settled her in a very fine House at *Rome*, where they pass their Time happily.

The Legates or Ambassadors of the sovereign Pontiff, are apt to raise Troubles, and foment Divisions in the Dominions to which their Master sends them. The abominable Slaughter on St. *Bartholomew's* Day, was owing to the pernicious Counsels of a Legate \*, sent to *Charles IX.* King of *France*; who concerted with that perfidious Ambassador the Death of the King of *Navarre* †, and of all the *Nazarenes* who were not Papists. The *Roman* Le-

\* The Cardinal *Alexandrin.*

† Who was afterwards *Henry IV.* King of *France.*

gate did not care that the King's Marriage with the Princess *Margaret*, shou'd be made use of as a Pre-text for it; but *Charles IX.* having convinc'd him that it was a sure way to be reveng'd of their Enemies, he consented to it without any Scruple, every thing being reckon'd good and lawful, provided they cou'd cut the Throats of the Adversaries of the Court of *Rome*.

Certain *Nazarenes*, whom I have talk'd with about this Action, have endeavour'd to excuse the Legate, and to throw the Blame upon the King. But the Fact is authentically prov'd by an unexceptionable Person, who knew it from Persons that had a Hand in it \*.

Is there any thing so shocking, dear *Monceca*, as to make the most sacred Things subservient to Murder and Slaughter, and to cover the most pernicious Designs with the Cloke of Friendship and Kindred? What a Marriage, just God, was this of the King of *Navarre*! The Furies lighted up *Hymen's* Torch, and Horror, Rage, Cruelty, Despair, and Impiety presided at the Ceremony. *I consent*, said *Charles IX.* to the Legate, *to conclude the Marriage with the King of Navarre, for no other Reason but to be reveng'd on mine Enemies,—and to chastise such great Rebels.* This King, who thirsted for the Blood of his Subjects, offer'd to give the perfidious Ambassador a Ring, to insure the Crime which he was contriving. But, says an *Italian* Historian, he re-

\* His Holiness added, that when the News of the Transaction on St. *Bartholomew's* Day, came to *Rome*, the Cardinal *Alexandrin* said, *God be prais'd! The King of France has kept his Word with me.* His Holiness said, he knew all this by being at that time Auditor to the said Cardinal, and his Companion in the whole Journey. *Cardinal Ossat's Letter from Rome, 22 Sept. 1599.*

fused

*refused to take Pledges for the Security of the Word of so great a King; tho', after St. Bartholomew's Day, Charles IX. sent him that Ring as a Token of his Adherence to his Oaths\*.*

Are these, dear *Monceca*, Oaths that are fit to be put in Execution? The Performance of them is even more execrable than the Promise. How happy wou'd it have been for *France*, if *Charles IX.* had entertain'd the same Opinion of the Legate, as a *French Poet* put into the Mouth of one of his Heroes:

——— *Non, je ne promis rien.*

*Le Legat † Instrument d'une indigne Foiblesse,  
S'empara de mon Cœur, en dicta la Promesse.  
S'il ne m'eût inspiré ce barbare dessein,  
Mon Cœur n'auroit jamais promis du sang Humain ‡.*

*i. e.* — No, I promise nothing. The Legate, a Tool of base Folly, having won my Heart, dictated to it what I shou'd promise. If he had not inspir'd me with that barbarous Design, I should never have had the Heart to make a Promise of shedding human Blood.

This Passage puts me in mind of another by the same Author, which gives a perfect Character of the Policy of the Court of *Rome*.

*C'est ainsi, qu'en perdant la Pere par le Fils,  
Rome devient fatale à tous ses Ennemis ||.*

\* The Life of Pope *Pius V.* by *Girolamo Catena*, written in *Italian*, and printed at *Rome* by *Alexander Gerdano* in 1588. *Catena* says, that *Charles IX.* caus'd this Motto to be engrav'd on the Ring, *Nec Pietas possit mea sanguine solvi.*

† 'Tis in the Original *Neptune*.

‡ *Crebillon* in *Idomeneus*.

|| Ditto in *Rhadamistus*.

*i. e.* Thus does *Rome*, by making the Son the Executioner of the Father, become fatal to all her Enemies.

The most crafty and most dangerous Policy becomes innocent among the *Romans*, and all the *Italians* in general, when 'tis capable of answering their Aim. Happy are those Nations, dear *Monceca*, whose Politics are only a Science to point out the Snares that Men lay for us, so as we may avoid them, and not to punish one Crime by another, and to authorize the foulest Deeds!

Another Legate, during the Wars which *Henry IV.* was oblig'd to sustain, before he came to the peaceable Possession of his Throne, did what he cou'd to debauch his Majesty's Subjects and Soldiers; and for this end employ'd Promises, Menaces, Intreaties, and above all Indulgences, which are the Coin that the Court of *Rome* lays out more freely than any other Species. He wou'd fain have decoy'd his General *d'Anglure de Givri*, and in order to persuade him to abandon the King's Cause, he told him of his Merit, and the Reputation which he had acquir'd. But all his flattering Speeches serv'd to no Purpose, *Givri's* Loyalty to the King was always steady. The Legate perceiving that he cou'd not shake it, exhorted him however, as he profess'd himself a good *Nazarene* Papist, to beg Pardon for all that was past of the sovereign Pontiff, and of him who was his Representative, giving him to understand that he desir'd nothing better than to grant it to him. This *Givri*, who was naturally a pleasant Droll, fell on a sudden at the Feet of the Legate, and ask'd for Pardon with a very contrite Air, for all the Evils that he had brought upon the *Parisians*, who were the sovereign Pontiff's Adherents. During this, the Legate wav'd his Right-hand over his Head, and mutter'd  
certain

certain Words between his Teeth, which the Nazarenes call *Absolution*. But Givri-interrupting him, said to him very seriously; *I beg you to grant me Absolution also for the Time to come, because I am really resolv'd to treat the Enemies of the King my Master even worse than ever.* Then the Legate fretting and fuming to find himself banter'd, revok'd the Pardon which he had just granted to Givri, who suffer'd him to take back his Absolution; and laughing in his Face, he withdrew from him, and continued loyal to his Prince \*.

If all the *Nazarene* Papists had been as virtuous and as honest as this loyal Subject was, *France*, which always submitted to the Sovereigns that God set over her, had not fallen a Prey to Discord and Division. Mad Superstition in the Monastic Habit had not forc'd one Brother to imbrue his Hands in the Blood of another, and Religion had never serv'd for a Cloak to Rebellion.

This is a Principle, dear *Monceca*, of which I think every honest Man, and every loyal Subject must be convinc'd. Tho' a Monarch were to turn *Turk*, the Oath of Fidelity taken to him ought to be kept sacredly. *How!* (methinks I hear some cry out) *what when they go to force the Conscience?* And can Monarchs seated on their Thrones chuse what Religion they will be of? Their Faith must be at the Choice of their Subjects: A Man must be either a Fool, or Mad, or Romantic, to maintain such an

\* *Genu flexo supplex, & composito Vultu, Veniam se contra Parisienses admissorum petere professus est; interpositâque aliquâ morâ, quasi serio Rem gereret, postquam à Cardinali Benedictionem accepit, antequam surgeret, etiam futurorum Gratiam sibi fieri petiit; nam decrevisse contra Parisienses acriusquam antea Bellum gerere: quibus dictis, cum Risu se à Cardinalis Gratiam factam revocaretis conspectu subduxit.* Thuanus Tom. IV. p. 154.

Extravagant Opinion. If I were a Sovereign of a *Nazarene* Country, I would establish a certain Temple where I would appoint candid honest Laymen to preach up a System of Morality, which shou'd be a Counterpoise to that of the Monks. How happy wou'd it have been for *Henry III*, and his Successor, if there had been such Preachers at *Paris* to balance those of the League, and those that were sent to that City by the Pontiffs and the *Spaniards*! These latter being eternally at enmity with the *French*, but always overcome by them in the Time of their greatest Division, despairing of being ever able to bring them under, employ'd the Poison of Monkish Fury:

*Helas ! elle a des Reis egorgé le plus grand !\**

Alas ! it cut the Throat of the greatest of Kings !

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca* ; as soon as I can write thou shalt hear from me. May the God of our Fathers prosper thee with abundance.

\* *Racine* in *Athalie* :

*Helas ! ils ont des Rois égaré le plus sage !*

i. e. Alas ! they have misled the wisest of Kings.







# L E T T E R L X.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, lately a Rabbi,  
at Constantinople.*

**I** Make no doubt, dear *Isaac*, but thou art arriv'd by this time at *Alexandria*. If thou makest any stay there before thou proceedest to *Cairo*, thou wilt do me a Pleasure to write some account to me of the Antiquities there, of which, I am assured, there is a great Number, and that Time has spared several Pieces which are still preserved intire; and many more there wou'd have been if the Barbarity of the *Turks*, the Fury of War, and the Avarice of the Inhabitants had not prov'd the Ruin of a great Number of Structures which have been pull'd down either from a Principle of Superstition, or from the Expectation of Gold hid in the Foundations, or in their thick Walls. A Number of Columns have been demolish'd in hopes of finding Medals under their Cases, like to those which had already been discover'd under others. Therefore the finest Pieces of Architecture were inhumanly broke to pieces; and as to those that are left standing, we are only obliged for it to their unshaken Solidity.

When I was at *Constantinople*, I frequently discoursed with some *Jews* that had travell'd to *Egypt*, who told me a great many things of which I shou'd be glad to know the Truth under thy hand. They also assur'd me that the Manners of the *Egyptians* differ in a great many things from those of the *Turks*

who live at *Constantinople*, and over all *Greece*. Inform me therefore, dear *Isaac*, of all these matters, which I shall be Master of with Certainty, when I receive the Information from a Person of thy Wisdom and Judgment. In exchange for thy Intelligence, I will endeavour to give thee some Remarks upon the Manners and Customs of the Countries which I shall travel through, after I leave *France*; for my Affairs will be soon finish'd at *Paris*, so that I purpose to set out from thence in a Month or two; and I shall be oblig'd to make a Tour into *Flanders*, and from thence I shall pass over to *England*.

I cou'd wish that the Chevalier *de Maisin* were to accompany me in the Voyage, for I shou'd think myself very happy if I cou'd have so excellent a Companion. I have infinite Obligations to that Gentleman, for he helps me every Day to a thorough Knowledge of his Countrymen, and explains even the minutest Difficulties. Yesterday he carried me to the House of an Author of his Acquaintance, who is reckon'd to have one of the best Pens in *France*: We found him with two other Authors in Company, and they seem'd all three to be engaged in a very warm Dispute; so that they hardly took notice of us when we came into the Room. But the Chevalier *de Maisin* presenting me to his Friend, the three learned Gentlemen grew a little calmer when they saw we were come to join them. After Compliments were pass'd, the Chevalier *de Maisin* was curious to know what the three learned Gentlemen were disputing about. ‘Gentlemen, *said he*, may one ask you  
 ‘ what is the Topic you are debating? Is it Meta-  
 ‘ physics, Mathematics, or Natural Philosophy? It  
 ‘ relates to Authorship, *said the Chevalier's Friend*,  
 ‘ and by consequence is of much more Importance  
 ‘ to the Republic of Literature: For the Point  
 which

' which is of the greatest Advantage and the most  
 ' essential to the Being of Scholars, is the Means of  
 ' Subsistence; yet this is what the Booksellers oppose;  
 ' and if the Government does not make some Re-  
 ' gulation for checking their Avarice, all Authors  
 ' must be content for the future to enjoy those trans-  
 ' parent Bodies, that shall require no Nourishment.  
 ' Is it not surprising that a Bookseller shou'd allow  
 ' the Abbé *Grisonet* but six Livres a Sheet for his  
 ' Romances? Six Livres! said one of the Authors,  
 ' the very Abbé that was mention'd; and if you  
 ' please M. *Tragedin*, you may reckon the correct-  
 ' ing of the Proof-sheets into the bargain. This  
 ' is abominable! reply'd the Chevalier's Friend;  
 ' you dishonour the Majesty of the Profession of an  
 ' Author, by sinking it to six Livres per Sheet,  
 ' including the trouble of Correcting. It were a  
 ' hundred times better to be starv'd to death.

' But, M. *Tragedin*, reply'd the third of those  
 ' Writers who had not yet spoke, you don't con-  
 ' sider that *Venter caret auribus*, The hungry Belly  
 ' has no Ears. 'Tis a very easy matter for you to  
 ' preach up the Grandeur and Dignity which ought  
 ' to shine in our august Character; you have a  
 ' tolerable Income, and may therefore defy the  
 ' Avarice of the Booksellers: But if, as it very  
 ' often happens with me, you had work'd all the  
 ' Day, and had taken but one Dish of Coffee, and  
 ' that upon Tick at *Gradot's* \*, you wou'd be  
 ' very glad to let your Works go at the Price that  
 ' is bid for them. Indeed you are very happy,  
 ' M. *Poetafter*, reply'd the Abbé, to have Credit

\* A Coffee-house at the Foot of the *Pont-neuf*, the  
 Rendezvous of pretended Wits.

‘ at *Gradot’s*: ’Tis now a Fortnight since I lost  
 ‘ that same Favour; for his Wife brought me in a  
 ‘ Bill of Two thousand nine hundred and thirty-  
 ‘ two Dishes of Coffee, which not being able to  
 ‘ pay, she wou’d give me Credit no longer. What,  
 ‘ Sir, said the *Chevalier de Maisin*, do you owe  
 ‘ for Two thousand nine hundred and thirty-two  
 ‘ Dishes of Coffee? Yes, reply’d the Author; I  
 ‘ have not given the Coffee-man a Penny for  
 ‘ these nine Years past, and one Dish a Day comes  
 ‘ exactly to that Accompt, allowing for the Leap-  
 ‘ years. I thought to have paid off the three  
 ‘ first Years Debt out of the Money that I should  
 ‘ get by a certain Manuscript, but not receiving  
 ‘ half the Sum that I expected for it, I cou’d  
 ‘ not do it. However, I fancy, *M. Poetaster*,  
 ‘ continued the Author, that you owe as much as  
 ‘ I do; for we were admitted Members of *Parnas-*  
 ‘ *sus* at the same Time, and both of us install’d  
 ‘ upon the same Day in the Coffee-house of Wits.  
 ‘ That’s true, reply’d the other Author, but fore-  
 ‘ seeing that the same Misfortune might happen  
 ‘ to me, as has happen’d to you, I presented the  
 ‘ Coffee-woman some time ago with a Sonnet, in  
 ‘ which I prais’d her extravagantly. She gave me  
 ‘ six Months longer Credit, and I hope to be able  
 ‘ to pay her in that Time, when I shall have  
 ‘ finish’d my *Universal History* in eighteen Volumes  
 ‘ in Folio. I was in hopes my Baker wou’d have  
 ‘ given me leave to dedicate it to him, on the pro-  
 ‘ viso of supplying me with Bread for eight Years  
 ‘ gratis; but he was deaf to my Proposal; for the  
 ‘ Man is not so fond of Immortality as Money.  
 ‘ Mean time I am not at all sorry that I did not  
 ‘ strike this Bargain with him, because I have ano-  
 ‘ ther Person in View, who will undoubtedly be of  
 ‘ more Service to me.

‘ I really

‘ I really fear, *reply'd the Abbé Grifonet*, that  
 ‘ you reckon without your Host: The Financiers  
 ‘ are sensible how ridiculous it makes them to de-  
 ‘ dicate Books to them, and that when a Knave is  
 ‘ prais'd, 'tis done on purpose to expose him the  
 ‘ more to the Derision of the Public. The fine  
 ‘ Sparks, and the Men of Quality are almost as  
 ‘ much distress'd in their pecuniary Affairs, as the  
 ‘ Authors. The Gentlemen of the Long Robe  
 ‘ fancy that they ought to pay nothing for Epistles  
 ‘ Dedicatory, but Thanks; and the rich Men of  
 ‘ Wit nothing but Praise: And if I may speak my  
 ‘ Mind, it must soon come to such a pass that Au-  
 ‘ thors will be glad to follow the Examples of a  
 ‘ Writer of our Time, who only dedicates his Books  
 ‘ to the Shades and Manes of the Dead.

‘ I have a Subject, said another Author who is  
 ‘ not in the same Case with any of those you men-  
 ‘ tion, I mean the new King of *Corfica*, who I  
 ‘ doubt not will be over-joy'd at his new Accession  
 ‘ to the Crown, to receive Marks of the Joy  
 ‘ which it gives to the chief Members of the Com-  
 ‘ monwealth of Learning. I will even make it  
 ‘ plain to all *Europe* in the Epistle Dedicatory  
 ‘ which I shall address to him, that he has Law-  
 ‘ ful Rights to *Corfica*. As to that Matter, *re-*  
 ‘ *ply'd the Chevalier de Mailin with a Smile*,  
 ‘ you will give me leave to think that you'll find  
 ‘ it a hard Task to make out a Paradox so ex-  
 ‘ traordinary. Pardon me Sir, *reply'd the Au-*  
 ‘ *thor*, I'll set about it thus; I will prove in the  
 ‘ first place, that in the first Government of the  
 ‘ *Corficans*, Bastards were capable of succeeding to  
 ‘ the Crown. Afterwards I will cause one of the  
 ‘ antient Princes of *Corfica* to travel into *Germany*,  
 ‘ where in the County of *la Mark* he shall be  
 ‘ marry'd clandestinely without any Formality

‘ and without any other Witness but the God of  
 ‘ Love, with a Daughter of the Family of *Nieu-*  
 ‘ *hoff*, and consequently upon this first Bastard ca-  
 ‘ pable of succeeding to the Crown of *Corfica*, I will  
 ‘ establish the Rights of *Theodore I*.

‘ I submit, *said the Chevalier de Maisin*, and I  
 ‘ own to you, *M. Poetafter*, that I cou’d never  
 ‘ have thought you wou’d have hit upon such an  
 ‘ Expedient. The only Question now is, whether  
 ‘ the new King of *Corfica* will take it very well  
 ‘ that you should derive his Pedigree from this  
 ‘ Bastard? He would be in the wrong to take it  
 ‘ amiss, *reply’d the Author*, but to prove to him  
 ‘ that ’tis no Blot in his Escutcheon, I will take  
 ‘ care to instance the Sultans to him, who are all  
 ‘ merry-begotten Children, and not born in law-  
 ‘ ful Wedlock.

‘ I am, *said the Abbé Grifonet*, of *M. Poeta-*  
 ‘ *ster’s* Opinion, and *Theodore* ought to be satis-  
 ‘ fied with a Vindication of his Accession to that  
 ‘ Crown, let it be perform’d how it will. I wou’d  
 ‘ fain, provided it does not disoblige *M. Poeta-*  
 ‘ *ster*, and that he thought it wou’d not prejudice  
 ‘ the Dedication of his *Universal History*, dedicate  
 ‘ to the same Monarch the *Life of Prince Eugene*,  
 ‘ which I shall finish in a Day or two. Have you  
 ‘ wrote the *Life of Prince Eugene*, *said the*  
 ‘ *Chevalier de Maisin*? Yes, Sir, *reply’d the Abbé*,  
 ‘ I began it the very Day that his Death was pub-  
 ‘ lish’d in the Gazette. The Bookseller for whom  
 ‘ I work gave it out every where that I was upon  
 ‘ it, for fear my Project should be stole from  
 ‘ me, and another get the Start of me. To be  
 ‘ sure, *said the Chevalier de Maisin*, you have had  
 ‘ several Memoirs communicated to you? I have  
 ‘ the *Gazettes*, and *Historical Mercuries*, *reply’d the*  
 ‘ *Abbé*. With these Helps only, Thanks to God,

‘ and to the Desire of getting Money, I have wrote  
 ‘ thirty-two Sheets in eleven Days and a half, and I  
 ‘ am just at the End of my Work. But as quick-  
 ‘ as I write, I work very slowly in comparison:  
 ‘ with M. *Poetaster*, who in a Year and a half  
 ‘ wrote his *Universal History*, for he finish’d a Vo-  
 ‘ lume in Folio every Month; and yet I am assur’d  
 ‘ that whenever it comes out, it will be esteem’d  
 ‘ by all good Judges.

‘ You are too good to me, *reply’d the other Au-*  
 ‘ *thor*, I don’t deserve these Praises. Indeed I  
 ‘ might perhaps have perform’d something tolera-  
 ‘ ble, if I had spent a little more Time upon it;  
 ‘ but I tax’d myself at three printed Sheets a Day,  
 ‘ which good or bad, I was under a Necessity of  
 ‘ finishing; for otherwise a Man cannot live. In  
 ‘ plain Terms, such as is the Pay, such is the  
 ‘ Work. As to promoting the Sale of the Book  
 ‘ when ’tis printed, that’s the Booksellers Business.  
 ‘ If any are left upon their Hands in their Shops, ’tis  
 ‘ so much the worse for them. When I want Mo-  
 ‘ ney, and the Work is in haste, I set all my Peo-  
 ‘ ple at Work; my Wife dictates, my Children  
 ‘ write, and I revise the whole; and when that’s  
 ‘ done, leave it to take its Fate.

‘ You are a happy Man, *said the Abbé Grifonnet*,  
 ‘ to have such Assistance at hand; but I who have  
 ‘ neither Wife nor Children, am oblig’d to do all  
 ‘ myself; but however, when a thing is out of my  
 ‘ Hand, I don’t take the Trouble of revising it.

‘ I don’t blame you, *said the Chevalier de Mai-*  
 ‘ *sin’s Friend*, since the Booksellers are inclin’d to  
 ‘ screw you to such Terms, you are in the right  
 ‘ to deal with them as you do. And notwith-  
 ‘ standing my Ambition for Fame, I fancy that  
 ‘ I shou’d hurry my Work as you do, If I were  
 ‘ press’d with Hunger; and I own to you that I am

‘ oblig’d for half my Genius to the Tranquility of  
 ‘ my Stomach, which I can satisfy before I take  
 ‘ Pen in Hand.

I know not, dear *Isaac*, how thou relishest the  
 Conversation of these Authors, but I thought it  
 so ridiculous that I cou’d not help imparting it to  
 thee.

Fare thee well; and let me have the Pleasuré  
 of hearing from thee oftener.



## L E T T E R L X I.

*From AARON MONCECA at Paris, to  
 ISAAC ONIS, a Caraité, lately a Rabbi,  
 at Constantinople.*

A S I went from the Author’s House that I men-  
 tion’d in my last, the Chevalier *de Maisin* de-  
 sir’d me to go with him to a Bookseller in *St.  
 James’s-street*, where he wanted to buy some Books.  
 When he arriv’d at his Shop he found him very an-  
 gry, and scolding at his Wife, Child, ‘Prentices,  
 &c. *What’s the matter, Sir*, said he to him, *you  
 seem to be very much out of Temper?* ‘ What’s the  
 ‘ matter, Sir, answer’d the Bookseller, I wish that  
 ‘ all Authors and Correctors too were at the Devil,  
 ‘ and that the whole Race of ‘em had been extinct  
 ‘ for above a hundred Years past. But pray tell me,  
 ‘ said the Chevalier *de Maisin*, what is it makes you  
 ‘ so uneasy? Perhaps I might be of some service  
 ‘ to you. I will tell you, said the Bookseller, and  
 ‘ leave you to judge whether such an Accident  
 ‘ cou’d have happen’d to me if I had not been born  
 ‘ under a very unlucky Planet.

‘ You



‘ You know the History of *Thuanus*, or *M. de*  
 ‘ *Thou*, ’tis really a very good Book; I had under-  
 ‘ taken to reprint a Translation of it, corrected  
 ‘ and enrich’d with Notes. But surely the Devil  
 ‘ was in the Wind, for all my Projects are vanish’d  
 ‘ in Smoak, and my Money is evaporated to no-  
 ‘ thing. I had contracted with an Author for this  
 ‘ Work at Nine hundred Livers, and thought I had  
 ‘ made an excellent Bargain. I pray hear now  
 ‘ what happen’d; the Author who undertook to  
 ‘ revise this Historian, did not understand *Latin*,  
 ‘ and talk’d very bad *French*. In order to supply  
 ‘ those Defects, he took a *German* into Partnership  
 ‘ with him, who indeed understood a little *Latin*,  
 ‘ but his *French* was a very bad Jargon. These  
 ‘ two cursed Authors set about the Work, and in  
 ‘ the mean time I advanc’d my Money to them  
 ‘ at six, and four Pistoles at a time: At last, after  
 ‘ having given them near Three hundred Livres,  
 ‘ I wanted to see how it was perform’d be-  
 ‘ fore I paid any more. Therefore I caus’d some  
 ‘ of the Tomes which were put into my Hands as  
 ‘ perfect and correct, to be revised: They who  
 ‘ examin’d them found them detestable: The old  
 ‘ Translation was marr’d instead of mended; and  
 ‘ the new one was neither *French*, *Dutch*, *Italian*,  
 ‘ nor *Spanish*: In short, there was no guessing what  
 ‘ Language those two damn’d Blotters of Paper wrote  
 ‘ in; yet ’twas visible that their Idiom was rather  
 ‘ *Gascon*, or that of *Provence*, than any other. In  
 ‘ a Rage I rescued my Work from such bad Hands;  
 ‘ but I can’t be easy for the Loss of my Money,  
 ‘ and am resolv’d to fall out hereafter with all Au-  
 ‘ thors, right or wrong.\*

‘ Your

\* A *Dutch* Bookseller having a mind to reprint the  
*French* Translation of *M. de Thou*, which was publish’d  
 H. 6. at

‘ Your Anger, *said the Chevalier de Maisin*,  
 ‘ will be over; and I am sure that you wou’d not  
 ‘ care to be embroil’d with the Journalists, tho’ it  
 ‘ were even with those of *Trevoux*, whose Works  
 ‘ are not to be met with now, but in the Shops of  
 ‘ Grocers and Chandlers. You are too much  
 ‘ afraid of having the Books which you print criti-  
 ‘ ciz’d. True it is, *said the Bookseller*, that I am  
 ‘ fore’d to keep fair with those Journalists, but I  
 ‘ don’t love them a whit the better for it. If they  
 ‘ commend my Books, I know the Cost of it full  
 ‘ well; and there is not a single Extract for which  
 ‘ I don’t give a Pistole. You have, *reply’d the*  
 ‘ *Chevalier de Maisin*, the Pleasure of having a very  
 ‘ pitiful Performance often recommended as an  
 ‘ excellent Book. There’s a great many Ninnies  
 ‘ who seriously believe the Journalists to be Ora-  
 ‘ cles, and upon their bare Approbation pay dear for  
 ‘ the worst Books. ’Tis certain that you poison the

at *Paris* some Time ago, apply’d to a Rascal †, one  
*Damat of Provence*, who had been forc’d to fly to *Hol-*  
*land* because a Warrant was issued to apprehend him  
 for some vile Pranks he had committed under an At-  
 torney to whom he was Clerk. This Man, who un-  
 derstood *Latin* no more than the Water-carriers at *Paris*  
 understand *Hebrew*, had the Assurance to undertake to  
 revise it; and having taken a *German* Partner, who  
 hardly understood a Word of *French*, the first Things  
 that happen’d to fall under his Pen were spoil’d. In  
 what Hands are not the Works of the greatest Men  
 sometimes trusted? This Revival is actually at this time  
 in the Hands of two other Botchers, as incapable as the  
 former to do any manner of good with it. With  
 such Zeal and Gratitude do certain Booksellers serve the  
 Public, that has enrich’d them.

† See *les Caprices de l’Amour de la Fortune; or Aventures de Ro-*  
*salina*, p. 137.

Public with the insipid Productions of three or four bad Authors; but in the Republic of Letters this Crime is not punish'd. Sad Authors are permitted to write Books, Fools to read them, and Booksellers to put them off for as much as they can. Why how shou'd we live else, *said the Bookseller?* What would become of that Swarm of Authors and Correctors that subsist only by the silly Stuff with which they stain Paper? In all Callings there are Quacks; bad Authors are Quacks in the Commonwealth of Learning, tho' their Drugs often sell better than the Compositions of Greater Men. But now you talk of the Journals, *contin'd the Bookseller*, I forgot that I have a Letter here which I must send to a Journalist. Pray permit me to read it, *said the Chevalier*, I promise you to be secret, and will engage the same for my Friend. The Bookseller did not want to be importun'd, but open'd the Letter, and gave it to the *Chevalier de Muisin*, who was so diverted with it, that he copy'd it on the Spot. The Bookseller indeed at first oppos'd it, but at last he comply'd upon the Chevalier's repeating his Assurance, that he would never divulge it as long as he liv'd.

A LETTER from S——\* *the Bookseller, to his Journalist.*

S I R,

MY Apprentice will give you ten Pistoles to discharge the Debt to the Journal for the present three Months; but I tell you very freely that I am not hugely satisfy'd with your

\*—— *Quid rides? mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur.*

Hor. Sat.

way

' way of Writing, and if it holds, I must provide  
 ' myself elsewhere. You praise my Books too  
 ' faintly, and are not severe enough upon those of  
 ' my Brethren. Endeavour in your Criticisms and  
 ' your Invectives to imitate the *Journalists de Tre-*  
 ' *voux*; mind how they tear to pieces, right or wrong,  
 ' all Works that come from the Pen either of a  
 ' Jansenist or a Protestant. Those are Models for  
 ' your Imitation: but it seems as if you piqued your-  
 ' self on some Remains of Modesty, and that you are  
 ' afraid to declare openly that an excellent Book is  
 ' good for nothing. Deal ingeniously with me al-  
 ' ways. Have not those same *Journalists de Tre-*  
 ' *voux*, that I mention'd to you as one of the Ex-  
 ' amples which you ought to follow, have not  
 ' they ventur'd two or three times to condemn  
 ' certain Works of *Bayle* and *Boileau* for no other  
 ' reason but because they did not love the  
 ' Authors? As for you, let Avarice supply the  
 ' Place of Hatred. Consider of it, Sir; if you  
 ' are afraid to tell a Lye, that's to yourself; but  
 ' for my part, I don't pay you for telling the  
 ' Truth, but to commend the Books which I print,  
 ' the Bad as well as the Good, and to find fault  
 ' with all that may hinder the Sale of 'em. It  
 ' seems you are for imitating the Probity and Sin-  
 ' cerity of *Bayle*, and *Sallo*. 'Tis at your own  
 ' Option, Sir, to do as they do; but you will be  
 ' so good as to look out for another Bookseller, as  
 ' I shall for another Journalist. However, Sir, if  
 ' you are willing that we shou'd continue to have  
 ' any Dealings together, try to arm yourself with  
 ' a little more Brass, and, in the present Journal  
 ' which you are now at Work upon, be so good  
 ' as to lash the Performances of the Marquis  
 ' d'Ar—, not only those he has already publish'd,  
 ' but those that he shall publish hereafter, tho'  
 ' you

‘ you know nothing either of the Titles or the  
 ‘ Subjects. Take and tear to pieces all the Tracts  
 ‘ that are printed for the Booksellers *N—* and *P—*,  
 ‘ they are Jansenists, Enemies to God and the Go-  
 ‘ vernment, and what’s worse than all, Mine.  
 ‘ Get an exact Account of the Books written by  
 ‘ the Molinists of any eminence; cry them up to  
 ‘ the third Heaven, and especially those that you  
 ‘ find written by the Jesuits, tho’ it be even by  
 ‘ their Lay-brothers. Criticise the new Tragedy  
 ‘ of *Voltaire* with Severity, and don’t fail to re-  
 ‘ proach him bitterly for his having no Religion,  
 ‘ tho’ perhaps you have less yourself. You need  
 ‘ be in no Pain about that, it being only a Re-  
 ‘ proach which it is necessary to cast upon that  
 ‘ Author to stir up the Wrath of all Bigots against  
 ‘ him, and indeed of all People that don’t know  
 ‘ him. The Reverend Father the Rector told me  
 ‘ yesterday that he cannot be punish’d too much  
 ‘ for having propagated the Venom of Jansenism in  
 ‘ in his *Henriade*, and his *OEdipus*.’

*I am,*

*Sir, &c.*

Without doubt, dear *Isaac*, thou wilt be di-  
 verted with this Letter, and think as the Chevalier  
*de Maisin* and I do, that ’tis an Original of its  
 kind. We banter’d the Bookseller heartily on the  
 Praise that he was for bestowing upon sorry Books.  
 ‘ If, *said he*, none but good Books were printed,  
 ‘ half the Booksellers in the World must starve,  
 ‘ and the other half wou’d have much a-do to  
 ‘ live. There are few People that can discern a  
 ‘ good Book from a bad one: If it be but a new  
 ‘ one, we find a way to put it off; we take care  
 ‘ to

“ to get a pompous Character of it display’d in the  
 “ Journals, and the Public who are always the  
 “ the Admirers and Dupes of Novelty, buy the  
 “ Good and Bad indifferently.”

Thou wilt not be so much surprized, dear *Isaac*, at what the Bookseller said, if thou dost but consider that there are few People who are able to distinguish solid Beauties from Tinsel and false Brilliants. A Book which is perfectly Methodical, and in which the Beauty of the Sentiments is answerable to the Regularity of the Subjects does not strike the Imagination of some People so much as another, that has here and there certain sprightly, shining Sallies of Wit, tho’ they are not continued, but like to those Meteors which blaze on a sudden as if they wou’d set the whole World on Fire, and in a Moment are extinct. The Women especially are very fond of Books which captivate their Attention on account of some extraordinary Adventure. The Sublimity and Grandeur of Subjects, and the Beauty of Diction does not amuse them, so much as what is Marvellous and Extraordinary. And ’tis plain that they had much rather read Romances than Books of History, tho’ such as are for adding *Utile Dulci*, seldom find that Mixture in Romances. I cou’d wish that in the Title Page of such Books there was the Motto which is prefix’d to the antient *Amadis*, LIS & OUBLIE, *i. e.* Read and Forget; for tho’ the Reading of Works of this sort is amusing, yet the Remembrance of them is pernicious; for it leaves a Tenderness on the Heart which softens it, and gives the Mind a certain Taste for Adventures which are dangerous to young People, and apt to lead them very much astray.

I wou’d not be mistaken as if I was intirely against the reading of Romances; my Zeal does  
 not

not carry me so far as that comes to; but I wou'd have them read only as an Amusement, and not as a serious Affair; and that they shou'd be consider'd as pleasant Dreams, invented to give some little Amusement to Men of Business, and to unbend the Minds of those who apply themselves to serious Studies. Then the Romance wou'd become an innocent Pleasure, and People would no longer spend Months together in reading a Medley of Inchantments, Amours, Duels, Combats, Assignations, Treachery, Coquetry, and Knavery. The Profitable wou'd be join'd with the Delightful, and the reading of Books of History, Morality, and rational Philosophy wou'd be the Basis for Men to build on, that are desirous of Knowledge. 'Tis true, that this Refinement of the Taste wou'd be a mortal Blow to the Generality of Authors; and many Writers who pick up a Livelihood from some ill-digested Scraps of History, which they commit to the Press, wou'd perhaps be reduc'd to turn Shoe-makers. But if it were so, where wou'd be the Harm? There wou'd be only the fewer bad Authors, and Shoes would be the cheaper. The Government and the Republic of Letters wou'd both be the better for this new Regulation. The latter wou'd get rid of bad Subjects, that are a Disgrace to it, and the Kingdom wou'd find an Increase of its Artificers; and perhaps the Authors too wou'd be over-joy'd that they had chang'd their Condition: For how many Shoe-makers are there that live better than Writers? And how many of the latter, that were it not for the Goodness of those Shoe-makers to give them Credit, wou'd go barefoot? Let their Thirst for Fame be what it will, they wou'd soon be sensible that a Mechanic, who has no body to molest him, and is sure of three Meals a-day, is a hundred times happier than an Author who depends

for

for his Subsistence upon an Epistle Dedicatory, or a Sonnet.

But from what I say to thee, dear *Isaac*, thou must not imagine that all Authors in *France* are so unfortunate, and that there are no Persons who subsist by their Merit and Learning. As soon as a Writer has distinguish'd himself by any Talent, he is fortify'd against the Frowns of Fortune. 'Tis true that he never becomes rich, but in short he is so well paid for his Works, that he can afford to live handsomely. The Misery that I have been speaking of, is confin'd only to bad Authors, who commence such purely for Bread, and who miscarrying in their Aim, generally starve. They make a shift to live for a little while upon some Money which they get from the Booksellers; but sooner or later this Supply fails; and then it wou'd be happy for them, as I have already said, that they cou'd be Shoe-makers, or even Cobblers; for in such a Calling they wou'd not be liable to the Misery in which they now pine.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers give thee Wealth and Prosperity in Abundance.



## L E T T E R LXII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, lately a Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

**T**HOU' I take such Care, dear *Isaac*, to be acquainted with the Manners and Customs of the *French*, yet I apply several Hours of the Day to Study.



Study. I am assiduous to complete, or at least to augment, the little Knowledge that I have acquir'd, and I endeavour to avoid every thing that may obscure or render it less clear and difficult. I am careful to observe a Rule, and to follow a Method which may make the Knowledge of the Truth easy for me. I am of Opinion, that the extravagant Respect which Men pay to the Antients, produces two pernicious Effects; it accustoms them to make no Use of their own Talents, and by little and little incapacitates them to make use of their Reason. They who spend their whole Lives in reading of *Aristotle* and *Plato*, don't take so much Pains to reconcile the Opinions of those Philosophers with Truth, and to reject those which have the contrary Appearance, as to know them all in general, and blindly to defend and embrace them, without requiring any other Proofs of them than their being in the Works of those Antients.

Another dangerous Consequence, that sometimes attends the reading of the Antients, is the wild Confusion into which it throws the Ideas of such as apply themselves to it, without knowing how they ought to behave in a Study of this kind. 'Tis very profitable to read the Antients, when a Person ruminates on what he reads, when he reflects on the Sentiments that are discernable in their Works, and when the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors, great Men as they were, are consider'd nevertheless as meer human Beings, and by consequence liable to commit Faults: Then a Person may be capable of improving very much; but when a Man is over and above fond of a Writer, only because he is one of the Antients, and makes it his chief Aim to know every thing that he believ'd, without troubling himself with what is really necessary to be believ'd, that's acting as indiscreetly as a Man who thou'd prefer  
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an old Brass Medal, defac'd and spoil'd, to a Piece of modern Gold, finely engrav'd, and the more valuable by reason of its Weight. Is there any thing so precious as the Truth? And can all the Credit which an Author may have acquired in two thousand Years, turn the Balance against Reason and Evidence?

'Tis the common Folly of all Commentators, to deify the Defects and Errors of the Antients: They fancy that the Praise they give to the Authors on whom they comment, recoils in part upon themselves; and an Annotator is apt to look upon his Author and himself but as one and the same Person. *Upon this Supposition, Self-love plays its part admirably, and shares in the Incense which it sets a smoking to the Glory of another\**. The most singular thing of all is, that the Commentators don't only commend their Authors because they esteem them, but also because 'tis the Custom and Fashion establish'd by long Usage. A Commentator wou'd pass among his Brethren as a Novice in the Subjects he treats of, if he did not praise the Book and the Merit of its Author far beyond the Truth.

There are three sorts of Works that are calculated to lay Snares for our Reason and Understanding, by prepossessing them with false Ideas, viz. *Commentaries, Journals, and Prefaces*.

As it wou'd be ridiculous for a Person to say, that he is employ'd on an insignificant or trifling Subject, the Commentators always give Notice that they are illustrating or explaining a Divine Author of the First Rank, with a capacious, profound, and penetrating Genius, who was the Admiration

\* *Mallebranche's Search after Truth, part. ii. cap. 4. P. 200.*

of the Age in which he liv'd, and of all Ages since. The Jest of it is to find the same Commentator who is employ'd upon two Authors, whose Sentiments are directly opposite, contradicting himself in every Article, and extolling an Opinion to the Skies, which he had damn'd to the lowest Pit of Hell.

The Journalists blame or commend a Work, just as the Bookseller, who is at the Expence of Printing the Journal, is interested in the Approbation or Censure of it.

An Author endeavours in a Preface to impose on his Reader, and dazzle his Eyes, insomuch that there's hardly one to be met with, which is conformable to Truth and good Sense.

Therefore, dear *Isaac*, 'tis my Opinion, that in order for a Man to pass a solid Judgment on the Merits of a Book, whether antient or modern, 'tis absolutely necessary he should read it without Prejudice or Prepossession; that he shou'd first reconcile his Opinions with Reason, and then with the Works of Great Men; that he shou'd examine those Passages which may appear obscure or doubtful to us, reject those which we plainly see to be false, and adopt those with Pleasure which inform us and shew us the Truth, or which serve to corroborate the Knowledge of what we were acquainted with before. That's the only way of judging solidly of the Goodness of a Work, and all other Proofs are either false or uncertain.

The Generality of Mankind judge of the Goodness of a Book only from the Reputation of the Author; which, 'tis true, is a strong Prepossession in its Favour, but yet 'tis not a Mark that is infallible. *Scot*, and many other scholastic Authors, had a surprising Reputation in their Time, but are since fallen into such Contempt, that they are hardly so much  
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as known by some Monks. General Praise no further ascertains the Goodness of a Work, than as such Commendation of it is just and equitable, and as it is founded on the mature Reflection of the Persons that pronounce it.

Nor is the Sale of a Book any better Proof of its Goodness. As the Number of People that read trifling and puerile Performances, is far greater than those who apply themselves seriously to Study, the *Bigarrures de des Accords*, or, the Discords of ConCORDS, have been printed much oftener than the Works of *Des Cartes* and *Gassendi*; and the *Poetry* of Father *de Cerceau*, than the Poem of St. *Prosper* by M. *de Sacy*.

A Book ought not to be reckon'd a whit the better for its being scarce. The Writings of *Vanini* are very scarce, and so are many other Books written by Libertines; whereas the Works of *Cicero*, *Quintilian*, and *Plato*, are very common. Shall it therefore be said, that these are indifferent Authors, and but little in Request? On the contrary, most good Books are very common, and the bad ones scarce to be met with. *The Reason of it is plain*, says a modern Author, *good Books are often printed, and the bad ones but once or twice or most, and that's all*.

The *French* were prepossess'd, dear *Isaac*, to such a Degree towards the Close of the last Century, and the Beginning of this, that if an Author was but antient, he needed nothing more to have a Number of Advocates, who cry'd up his Faults for Perfections. On the other hand, several Persons were so far prejudiced in favour of the modern Writers, that they approv'd of nothing, and thought nothing of the Antients good. A Man cannot give into such extravagant Notions, without being a Fool, a Madman, and excessively ignorant. There is a  
just

just Medium in things. The Antients had their Faults, but then they had great Beauties; and there are some of 'em whom the Moderns cou'd never come up to. This is the Method which I think the properest for settling the Dispute about this Difference.

*Aristotle, Plato, Epicurus*, and the other antient Philosophers were very bad Naturalists, compar'd to *Gassendi, Des Cartes, Newton, &c.* and sorry Metaphysicians compar'd to *Locke* and *Mallebranche*. Their Notions as to moral Philosophy, were as perfect as ours; of the Truth of which Fact, *Tully's Offices* are an invincible Proof. They were meer Ignoramus's, or but little better, as to Astronomy, Navigation, and Geography; but in point of History they have outdone us. Father *Paul, M. de Thou, Rapin Thoyras*, are even far short of that Perfection which we find in the Fragments that are left us of *Salust* and *Tacitus*; and they are far inferior to *Titus Livy, Thucydides*, and *Xenophon*, be the Performance of the latter ever so inconsiderable.

The Beauties of *Tasso, Milton, Voltaire*, are not equal to those of *Homer* and *Virgil*; not but the Poems of the Antients have their Faults as well as the Modern, but they have so much of the Good, the Sublime, the Marvellous, that certain Faults are hardly visible, or at least are easily pardon'd \*. *Guarini's Pastor Fido, Fontenelle's Eclogues*, and

\* It must be allow'd, that there are great Defects in *Homer's Poems*. But a Man must be either very ignorant or prejudic'd, not to perceive their charming Beauties. Such is the *Iliad*, of which I shou'd rather choose to have been the Author, than of all *La Motte's Works*, and I will venture to say, than (excepting *Fontenelle's*) of all the Compositions of the Members of the *French Academy*; I mean the *French Academy* in its present State, in 1737.

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some of those of *Segrais* are perhaps preferable to the Works of *Theocritus*; but in *Virgil's* Works there are Eclogues which outweigh them, and perhaps totally eclipse them.

The Tragedies of *Sophocles* and *Euripides* are very beautiful; but a Man who is not an Idolizer of Antiquity, does not perceive so much of the Brilliant, nor so many Charms, and so much of the Soft and Sublime at the same Instant, as in those of *Corneille* and *Racine*. There are even some *French* Poets that come a vast way behind those two illustrious Moderns, but nevertheless may compare with the antient *Greek* Tragedians: The *Ariana* of *Thomas Corneille*, the *Rhadamistus* of *Crebillon*, the three last Acts of *Voltaire's Oedipus*, and his *Brutus*, are equal perhaps to the *Electra* of *Euripides*, and the *Oedipus* of *Sophocles*. As to the *Italians*, their theatrical Performances are detestable. It seems that *Italy* was never capable of producing any Genius, who cou'd treat a Tragic Subject as it shou'd be. *Seneca's* Pieces, which remain to us at this Day, don't come up to those of *Pradon*; and we shou'd have been very much oblig'd to our Ancestors, if they had left us some better Composition in the room of it.

As for Comedy, that of the Antients and the Moderns is pretty equal. *Aristophanes*, *Menander*, *Plautus*, *Terence*, may be match'd with *Don Lopez de la Vega*, *Moliere*, and some good *English* Authors of that kind. Yet I think if the Point was examin'd critically and impartially, after mature Reflection, one might be determin'd perhaps to give the Moderns the Preference.

Several Authors have composed very fine Elegies, and some Pieces of Gallantry in these latter Times. The Countess of *Suza* has succeeded perhaps better than all of 'em; but her Works don't  
come

come near those of *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, and *Propertius*. The Ode was carry'd by the *Greeks* and *Romans* to such a pitch of Perfection as it never has arrived to since. There is no Comparison between *Pindar*, *Horace*, and *Anacreon*, and *Malherbe*, *Rousseau*, and *la Motte*; not but the latter have many Beauties. *Rousseau* especially set out in such a manner, that the Advocates for the Moderns entertain'd Hopes that he would one day or other equal *Horace*. But it seems that the same Arret which blasted his Reputation, extinguish'd his Genius; for after he was banish'd from *France*, he did not write a Piece that was worthy of the Vivacity and Penetration of the *Brabanders*. And his Muse, tho' applauded at *Brussels*, is actually hiss'd every where else in *Europe*, by every Man that has the least Notion of *French* Poetry.

As to Eloquence, we are very much inferiour to the Antients. *Bossuet*, *Flequier*, *Patrou*, *la Maitre*, *Bourdalone*, had neither the Force, nor Fire, nor the Sublime of *Demosthenes*; nor have they come up to the Majesty, Grandeur and Dignity of *Cicero*. Modern *Italy* has produc'd no Orator of Distinction; and all its Preachers are rather Scaramouches, Buffoons and Harlequins, who divert their Hearers by Puns and Conundrums, than Men that pretend to reach the Heart, and to captivate the Minds of their Hearers by their Eloquence.

This is what I think, dear *Isaac*, may be said with the least Partiality as to the Dispute between the Antients and the Moderns. That's the Opinion of all the Learned Men who make use of their Reason, and don't abandon themselves intirely to the Prejudices which they may have imbib'd in their Infancy. The Regents in the Colleges generally inspire their Scholars with the utmost Contempt for

all Authors, whose Works are not fifteen hundred Years old. That was the Time, *say they*, when Men had the Freedom of Thinking; but since that, they have been forbid to make use of their Understanding. Young People accustom themselves by little and little to think after this manner, and don't care to have their Opinion contradicted, or so much as examin'd. They never look into Books that they hear run down; and when they are come to a certain Age, their Prejudices are so strong that they look into modern Authors in hopes of finding Arguments to diminish the Beauties that strike them. How many People that are charm'd with the Poetry, and noble bold Sentiments of *Voltaire*, yet condemn his *Henriade* without a Desire to distinguish the Beauties from the Defects; and this only because they fancy that a Modern cannot write a good Epic Poem? But I wou'd fain ask them, whether they believe that in antient Days Men had two Heads, two Souls, two Understandings, four Hands, and four Feet? If so, to be sure none of the Moderns can ever vie with the Antients. But if like us, they had but one Soul, and one Understanding, I doubt not but there may still be found a Genius as good as that of *Virgil*, except he that form'd it reveal'd to them that hereafter he would produce no more Men who should attain to that Perfection.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*; live content and happy, and may Heaven grant thee Health and Wealth. Pray write to me as soon as thou can'st.





## L E T T E R LXIII.

From JACOB BRITO, at Naples, to  
AARON MONCECA, at Paris.

**T**IS now six Days, dear *Monceca*, since I arriv'd at *Naples*. But before I acquaint thee with what Observations I have already made in this City, I will give thee some Particulars of what I saw going to *Loretto*. The *Nazarenes* pretend that the Temple of that City was carry'd thither by Angels. 'Twas a House in a Village of *Nazareth* in *Judæa*, which, as they say, was first brought to *Dalmatia*, and pitch'd upon the Mountain of *Ter-solto*, where for some time it rested. From thence the same Angels carry'd it farther, and set it down in a Forest near the Marquisate of *Ancona*. At length, after two or three Turns more, it was carried for good and all to the Place where it now stands: And the *Nazarenes* to fix it there intirely, and to prevent it from rambling any more about for the future, have built a magnificent Temple with which it is inclosed.

The Priests who serve in this Temple pretend that the House is built of Stones that are quite unknown: But I must tell thee, that after having examin'd the Thing, I plainly perceiv'd that it was built of Bricks, and certain grey reddish Stones, which are nothing more than what are very common. These Stones and Bricks are so ill join'd together that it is plain the Mason's Work was done in very great haste. People come to *Loretto* from all the Countries in the World; for all the

*Nazarene* Papists have as great a Veneration for this Place, as we have for *Jerusalem*; and some Years ago, during the Easter-Holidays there were at *Loretto* near Two hundred thousand Pilgrims, Men and Women; but Pleasure and Joy have as great a Share as Devotion in the Travels of the greatest Part of both Sexes to it. They make Parties for *Loretto* all over *Italy*, just like Parties for a Ball. The Monks and Nuns repair thither in Crouds, dress'd in odd fantastical Habits. When the way is a little too long, the People ride thither on the Backs of Asses, which are reputed to have a smack of Sanctity, like the Camel that brought the *Alcoran* to *Mecca*. They have the Talent and Virtue never to stumble, and are very tractable like their Brother Species; but they have far more Penetration, so that the Rider may let them go where they will, without fear of their rambling out of the Road.

The chief Ceremony of the Pilgrims when they come, is a Procession round the Temple upon their Knees, which is the pleafantest Sight in the World. Imagine, dear *Aaron*, thou was't to see two or three hundred School-boys hopping upon one Leg one after another, and when one tumbles, he that's next behind falls over him. Just so it happens to the Pilgrims of *Loretto*, who vie which shall creep nearest to the Wall of the Temple; so that some going one Way, and others meeting them, it happens very often that they jostle one another, and before the Devotion is over, they fall to kick and cuff.

If thou shouldst ask me, dear *Monceca*, when and how I think this Structure was built, it will not be an easy Task for me to give thee a very clear Account. All that I can assure thee with any Certainty is, that this pretended Miracle happening in the Pontificate of one *Boniface*, a cunning, sharp,

complaisant Man, capable of putting the greatest Designs in Execution, and withal excessively covetous, 'tis probable that in one Night several Workmen built that Fabric, which they say was brought from *Nazareth*, and which at most is but one Room, very small and low. This too is the more probable, because at that time there was no Habitation for above a League from the Place where the Temple of *Loretto* actually stands. At the Time when the Story of the sudden Arrival of this House was given out, the *Nazarenes* were plung'd in such gross Ignorance, and so besotted with Superstition, that they were ready blindly to believe any thing, ever so contrary to Sense and Reason. But I really question, whether such a Miracle wou'd make its Fortune now, or at least, whether it would meet with any Defenders except in *Italy*.

So much, dear *Monceca*, for *Loretto*. I come now to speak of *Naples*, where I have already seen a great many fine Places since I came. This City has been so often ravag'd, that most of its Antiquities have been destroy'd or damag'd; however the Ruins of an Amphitheatre are still to be seen, and two or three Fronts of old Temples which are appropriated to the Embellishment of new ones that have been built upon the Foundations and Ruins of the others.

*Naples* is one of the biggest and finest Cities in *Europe*, and even seems to have the Advantage of *Rome*, *London*, *Paris*, and *Venice*. 'Tis in the general regular and beautiful; those other Cities have indeed many grand Houses, but then they are interspersed with low ones, or such as are ill built, and disagreeable to the View.

The *Neapolitans* are reckon'd the worst and wickedest People in *Europe*. There was a Time when

a Couple of Crowns was a Market-price for a Man's Life; and there were above Three thousand Banditti in the Kingdom that had the Assurance to make a Stand against regular Troops, which were at infinite Trouble to extirpate the Race of 'em. But at length the *Spaniards*, and after them the *Germans* have almost intirely purg'd the State of all those Miscreants; for they put a great Number of them to death, and struck the others with such a Terror, that they have been forc'd to lay themselves under a Restraint, and to change their way of Life.

The *Neapolitans* formerly lov'd the *Spaniards* very much, but abhorr'd the *French*, and hated the *Germans*. Their way of thinking seems now to be partly chang'd: Of this they have given several Proofs since the last War; and at present I think it may be said, that they still abhor the *French*, and hate the *Spaniards*, but love the *Germans*. This is the Taste of all *Italy*; tho' I can't imagine what it is makes the People such Friends to the *Germans*. As for a *German* Officer indeed I am not at a Loss to think why he is better belov'd by an *Italian* than a *French* Officer: For the *German* drinks his Landlord's Wine, and takes Possession of the best Apartment in the House without much Ceremony; whereas the *Frenchman* on the contrary makes a thousand Cringes, lies in the Barn rather than sail; spends the little Money he has in Feasts and Presents, but caresses the Women; which last is a capital Crime among the *Italians*. But they hate the *Spaniards* from a different Cause; tho' since their Humours sympathize pretty much, being Bigots and Slaves alike to the Monks, and zealous Servants to the Holy Office, 'tis surprizing that they should be more in love with the Severity of the

the *Germans*, which keeps them under very great Restraint.

As there are few People in *Italy* so wicked as the *Neapolitans*, so there are few that are so ignorant and stupid. They seem to make no other use of their Reason, than to give a Relish to their Vice; for unless some wicked action is in hand, a *Neapolitan* has little more Sense than a Beast. This gross Ignorance prevails even among the People of Distinction, and 'tis really surprizing to see how shallow they are! They can tell how many Temples there are in *Naples*; which are the Saints Days; what Streets the Processions go through; what Coffee-houses People meet at; and that is all they know. Th'other Day as I was in one of those Coffee-houses, I heard a *Neapolitan* Nobleman ask a Question of a *Frenchman*, which will enable thee to judge of the Understanding of his Peers: He ask'd very seriously if the Harbour of *Paris* was as handsome as that of *Naples*, and if the King's Ships rode in it? I am willing to think that all the other Noblemen are not quite such Fools; but in general there is no Ignorance like to that of a *Neapolitan* Nobleman.

Most of the Grandees of the Country reside commonly at *Rome*; they pass some Time every Year at *Naples*, and after that Season is over, they go back again. They are in the right to think *Rome* a much more agreeable Place to reside in; for there is no Comparison betwixt the two Cities.

The Temples at *Naples* are magnificent beyond all Expression; they are adorned from top to bottom with Marble, Porphyry, Gold, Silver, Brass, and magnificent Painting; and those of *Rome*, unless we except *St. Peter's*, are not better than those of this City. One of the chief was built, as the

*Nazarenes* say, upon account of a great Miracle; for at *Naples*, as in the rest of *Italy*, scarce any thing is done, in which the Saints are not remarkably concern'd. They say therefore that the Devil, in the Shape of a Hog, walk'd every Day regularly in the Place where the Temple is built; and that he frighten'd the Inhabitants to such a Degree, that they ran away, and the City was by degrees quite deserted. This Devil of a Hog made a terrible Grunting. He spent his Time better than in turning up the Ground with his Snout; for when he caught any Person, especially such as had not taken care to give Charity to the poor Mendicant Friars, he maltreated them, and reduced them to a Condition which endanger'd their Lives. One *Pomponius*, who was at that time Pontiff of *Naples*, consulted a Female Saint for whom he had a very great Devotion, and she order'd him to build a Temple for her in the very Place where the Hog used to take his Recreation. As soon as the first Foundation-Stone of this Edifice was laid, the Devil disappear'd for ever; and the Pontiff caus'd a Brazen Hog to be made, which is kept in the Vestry of this Temple, to preserve the Remembrance of so illustrious a Miracle.

There are several Things in this City that are every whit as surprizing. In a certain Convent of Monks there's a Picture, by which the Painter pre-intended to represent the Deity, in Conversation with one *Thomas d'Aquinas*. But all these Prodigies are meer Trifles, compar'd to what happens here every Year in the principal Temple, which they call the *Cathedral*: The Blood of one *Januarius*, stopp'd up in a Bottle, boils as often as they bring it near the Shrine in which his Body lies. When this Miracle is slow in the Operation, and 'tis necessary to present the Bottle several Times to the Shrine,

Shrine, the People take it for a Threatning of the greatest Dangers. If *Januarius* shou'd not happen to be in the Humour to let his Blood boil at all, there wou'd perhaps be some strange Revolution in the City. 'Tis true that the Viceroy of *Naples* order the Priests very seriously to see that the Miracle has its Operation, and tell them they shall be answerable for the Success of it. Some Years ago the Bottle not bubbling as soon as it used to do, the People ran raving about the Streets like mad Folks; but at length the Miracle operated, and a Calm succeeded.

Is it possible, dear *Monceca*, that Men shou'd be so ignorant and silly as to give into such Chimæras, and for others to be so knavish as to endeavour thus to abuse the Credulity of the Vulgar? What wou'd the *Nazarenes* say of us, if we gave into such Errors? What Piles of Tracts wou'd be written against us? How ridiculous would their Authors make us? How bitterly wou'd they reproach us. ' Ye silly People (they wou'd say to us) what a Part do you make the Divinity to perform? Has he need to manifest himself by such Mummery? Lift up your Eyes to Heaven. See how the Sun repeats with Gigantic Strides its daily Race. These are Tokens worthy of the Grandeur of the Almighty. Have you forgot that he has forbid you by his Law to make yourself the Likeness of any thing in Heaven above, or upon the Earth beneath, or in the Waters under the Earth. Dash your Vial therefore in pieces, and the Image which you think has the Power of making this Blood to boil. Remember that the God of your Fathers even punish'd the Children for the Wickedness of their Parents.' Such would be the Language of the *Nazarenes* to us. But if they themselves do a thing, 'tis always virtuous and laudable. Infalli-

bility is their Portion, and Error and Confusion  
ours.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and let me have  
the Delight to hear from thee.



## L E T T E R LXIV.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraité, formerly a  
Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

A Poet of whom I have often made mention to thee, has lately enrich'd the Theatre with a new Tragedy which is beautiful, moving, well conducted, well diversify'd, and full of noble and bold Sentiments. Before I communicate some Reflections to thee which I have made upon the Subject of this Piece, and that thou may'st the better relish 'em, tis necessary for me to say one Word to thee concerning the Author's Character.

*Voltaire* (which is his Name) is of a lively penetrating bold Genius; he is an excellent Versifier, a better Philosopher than Poets are generally, a Man of Honour, affable and without Ceremony in Society, but so prepossess'd is he in favour of a Man of Wit, that he esteems a truly learned Man far beyond an antient Nobleman, who has no other Merit than his Title or Extraction. The little Regard he has shewn upon some Occasions to Persons of the first Rank, has brought dangerous Enemies upon his Back. He writes with such a bold Pen, and sometimes gives such a public Rebuke to Superstition, that the Monks, their  
Emissaries



Emiffaries, and thofe who don't love him, give it out all over *Europe*, that he has no Religion at all. Nevertheless in all his Works there is a Spirit of Candor and Humanity, which plainly fhews that he is thoroughly convinc'd of the Exiftence of a God, who is Good, Juft and fovereignly Powerful; and even fome of thofe Pieces, for which he is moft bitterly reproach'd, and in which he constantly denies his having any Share, are full from the Beginning to the End of the Praifes which all Men are oblig'd in Gratitude and Duty to afcribe to the Divinity.

That which is furprizing in this Country is, the Fury with which People attempt, tho' without Proofs, to charge certain Books and Writings upon Perfons that difavow them. Thou wou'd'ft be deceiv'd if thou thought'ft that in *France* an Author was only refponfible for his own Works; he is accountable for all that the Public and his Enemies are pleas'd to impute to him. The Vulgar has condemn'd twenty Writers for Pieces in which they never had the leaft Hand. But what will aftonifh thee more, is the Spite which certain mean Authors, the vile Excrements of *Parnaffus*, bear to all thofe that are diftinguifh'd for their Merit and Learning. They fufeit the Town with an Inundation of Satyrs, find fault with the beft Books without any Decorum, launch out into Inveftives in Coffee-houfes, and other public Places, and by meer Dint of Clamour they fometimes gain the Relief of the credulous Part of the Public; like to the Ravens, which by their Croaking filence the Song of the dear Nightingale, or drown its Melody.

One of *Voltaire's* bittereft Slanderers, is a Monster fpew'd up out of Hell for the Punifhment of all Authors who have any Reputation, and value themfelves upon their Honour. *Rouffeau*, which

is the Name of this Brother of *Melo*, with his Quiver of Calumny, wounded every Man that had any Merit with his Arrows; and tho' he was the Enemy of all Mankind, his Hatred raged with the more Violence against those that he thought the most deserving of Esteem. So many Crimes, in short, brought all *France* upon his Back: The Government thought itself bound in Interest to destroy a Villain and a Madman; he was condemn'd by an Arret of the Parliament of *Paris*, and if he had not fled for it, he wou'd have suffer'd the just Punishment of his Crimes by the Hand of the Hangman. He wander'd a long while from one Kingdom to another; and his Genius and Talent for Poetry made him welcome at first to those that did not know him. But like to the Viper in *Æscop*, he flew at his Benefactors as soon as they had rescued him from the miserable Plight to which he was reduc'd by his Rambles. At last, being weary of his Crimes, tho' not satiated, he stay'd some time without rousing his poisonous Serpents; but then like an implacable Fury, from his Retreat he bespatter'd all good Authors, whom he hated the more by reason of his Banishment. That, dear *Isaac*, was one of *Voltaire's* principal Adversaries; and by him you may judge what the others were.

I come now to *Voltaire's* Tragedy of *Alzira*, which is a Piece I take to be conducted with a great deal of Art and Learning. The Attention of the Audience is suspended and animated even to the last Scene; and the fifth Act furnishes such Distress, as is very moving. I will give thee an Idea of the Piece and of the Characters of the chief Actors.

*Alvarez*, the Father of *Guzman*, Governour of *Peru*, opens the Scene with his Son, and tells him  
of

of the Grant which he has receiv'd from the Council at *Madrid* to resign his Employment to him. He intreats him to release some Prisoners that were apprehended the Day before, and acquaints him how he was sav'd in a Battle by one of them, an *American* Youth. Don *Guzman* is loth to follow his Father's Advice. The Characters of Don *Alvarez* and Don *Guzman* are unravell'd perfectly well in this first Scene, and their Conversation makes the Audience absolute Masters of the Subject of the Piece. *Guzman*, when he grants Life to the Prisoners of his Father, who is as good-natur'd and as compassionate to the Unfortunate, as his Son is proud, haughty and cruel, intreats him to try what he cou'd to turn the Heart of *Alzira* (the Daughter of *Monteza*, Sovereign of a Part of *Potosi*) whom he is to marry. In the same Act we are inform'd by *Alzira* her self, that she had been promis'd to *Zamor*, an *American* Prince, and that she was just going to be join'd to him in Matrimony, when the cruel *Guzman* came and separated her from a Lover whom she ador'd. In repeating the Account of her Misfortunes to her Father *Monteza*, while he was pleading with her in favour of *Guzman*, she acquaints the Audience of them without Affectation, as well as of her changing her Religion. In the very first Scenes the Subject of the Piece is fully explain'd. *Zamor* who was thought to be dead, is one of those unknown Prisoners that had been set at liberty. He meets *Alzira* again the very Moment that she comes from the Altar where she had sworn to be true for ever to *Guzman*, who comes that instant and surprizes them both together. The great Spirit of this *American* did not suffer him to conceal his Name and Family. *Guzman*, who was vex'd and jealous to the last Degree, resolves he shall die;

die; but afterwards his Father oppos'd his Resolution, and by a certain Accident, which has a charming Effect on the Minds of the Audience, this same *Zamor* is discover'd to be that very *American* who had sav'd the Life of *Alvarez* in Battle. *Guzman*, notwithstanding his Father's Intreaty, orders *Zamor* to be committed to Prison. *Alzira* trembling for her Lover, bribes one of his Keepers; who undertakes to carry him safe out of the Town; but no sooner does *Zamor* find himself at liberty, than he takes the Opportunity to sacrifice the cruel *Guzman* on the Spot, tho' attended by his Guards. He is thereupon seiz'd and sentenc'd to die, as is likewise *Alzira*, who was thought to have had a Share in the Murder of her Spouse, tho' she was perfectly innocent. But just as these unhappy Victims to Love were expecting every Minute to be put to death, *Guzman*, who was not yet dead of the Wound he receiv'd from *Zamor*, makes amends for all his Cruelties and Barbarities, by shewing a generous Clemency in the last Breath of his Life.

This, in few Words, dear *Isaac*, is the Subject of the Piece; and the following are the different Characters of the Actors.

*Alvarez* is a perfect honest Man, full of Candor and Humanity, zealous for his Religion, but without being blinded by that Rage to which they give the Name of Piety.

*Guzman* is proud, vain, haughty, stately, cruel; such a Man, in short, as the *Spaniards* are represented to be who conquer'd *Mexico*; and is so fully possess'd with the pernicious Maxims of the Makers of Converts, that provided they are but made Christians, 'tis all alike to him which way 'tis done..

*Monteza* is a new Convert, convinc'd of the Religion which he has embrac'd; but his Daughter on the contrary wedded to her old Prejudices,

owes

owes her Virtue to her own good Sense only, so that few of her Motives are founded on Religion.

*Zamor* is zealous for his Gods, a faithful Lover, form'd by the pure Lessons of Nature, humane to all Men in general, irreconcilable to his Enemies, full of Valour, and fit for putting the boldest Designs in execution.

These various Characters are kept up perfectly well, and accompany'd with many glaring Incidents, which strongly engage Attention. *Alvarez* at the same time that he gives the first Idea of his own Character, thus informs the Audience of the Cruelties of the *Spaniards*,

*Ah! Dieu nous envoïoit, par un contraire Choix,  
Pour annoncer son Nom, pour faire aimer ses Loix:  
Et nous, de ces Climats Destructeurs implacables;  
Nous, & d'Or & de Sang toujours insatiables;  
Deserteurs de ses Loix qu'il falloit enseigner,  
Nous égorgions ce Peuple, au lieu de le gagner.  
Par Nous tout est in Sang, par Nous tout est en  
Poudre;*

*Et Nous n'avons du Ciel imité que la Foudre.  
Notre Nom, je l'avoue, inspire la Terreur;  
Les Espagnols sont craints; mais, ils sont en Horreur,  
Fléaux du nouveau Monde, injustes, vains, avarés,  
Nous seuls en ce Climat nous sommes les Barbares.  
B'Americain, farouche en sa simplicité,  
Nous egale en Courage, & nous passe en Bonté.*

Are we sent hither in our Maker's Cause,  
To spread his Name, and recommend his Laws?  
We! who destroy the Country without Mercy!  
Shall we with Blood and Gold insatiate rage?  
Shall we desert his Laws we were to teach,  
And cut the People's Throats to win their Hearts?  
Our Priests are all for Blood, for Sword and Fire,  
And only in its Thunder act like Heaven!

Our

Our Name I own it, Terror doth inspire,  
 The *Spaniards* dreaded are, but more abhor'd.  
 Proud, covetous, unjust; we, we alone  
 Are the *Barbarians* here, of this World the Scourge.  
 The wild *American*, tho' rough, yet honest,  
 Surpasseth us in Goodness, and hath not less Cou-  
 rage.

I cannot be certain, dear *Isaac*, whether thou art  
 sensible that all the different Characters of this Play  
 are visible in these fourteen Lines. That of *Alvarez*  
 is display'd by the Compassion which is conspicuous  
 in his Words, where he gives a perfect Picture  
 of the *Spaniards* and the *Americans*. 'Tis plain  
 that this is a Touch of a Masterly Hand. The  
 following is another, not a whit inferiour to it:  
*Alzira* speaking to her Father, draws her own  
 Picture.

*Mes yeux n'ont jusqu'ici rien vû que par vos Yeux !  
 Mon Cœur, changé par vous, abandonna ses Dieux.  
 Je ne regrette point leurs Grandeurs terrassées,  
 Devant ce Dieu nouveau, comme nous, abaissées.  
 Mais vous, qui m'assuriés, dans mes Troubles cruels  
 Que la Paix habitoit aux Pieds de ses Autels;  
 Que sa Loi, sa Morale, & consolante, & pure,  
 De mes Sens desolez guériroit la Blessure;  
 Vous trompiés ma Foiblesse; Un Trait, toujours Vain-  
 queur,*

*Dans le Sein de ce Dier vient déchirer mon Cœur.  
 Il y porte une Image à jamais renaissante:  
 Zamore vit encor un Cœur de son Amante*

Whate'er I see is with my Father's Eyes;  
 Whate'er I love is for my Father's sake:  
 I chang'd my very Gods and took my Father's.  
 Yet has this Father, piously severe,  
 Wrong'd my believing Weakness, and undone me.  
 He

He told me, to compose my troubled Heart,  
 Peace held her Dwelling at the Altar's Foot.  
 He told me, his Religion cur'd Despair,  
 Its Law, its Moral comforting and pure,  
 And soften'd every Pang that pierc'd the Soul.  
 But ah! 'twas all Deceit! all dear Delusion!  
 Mix'd with the Image of an awful God,  
 A human Image struggles in my Heart,  
 And checks my willing Virtue in its rising!  
*Zamor*, tho' dead to Nature, lives to Love;  
*Zamor* still triumphs in *Alzira's* Breast.

That Trouble, and that Struggle of the Mind  
 which *Alzira* so well expresses, perfectly denotes  
 the Disposition of a Heart only chang'd by a pater-  
 nal Respect, and which has not such a firm Belief  
 in the new Deity which it serves, as to merit its  
 Favours and Rewards. How particular soever *Al-*  
*zira's* Character is, 'tis perfectly supported, and full  
 of new Sentiments created by the Novelty of the  
 Subject. Such is this Passage, where the Author  
 makes *Alzira* draw a Parallel between the *Spanish*  
 and *American* Ladies.

*Par ce grand Changement dans ton Âme inhumaine,*  
*Par un Effort si beau, tu vas changer la mienne.*  
*Tu l'assures ma Foi, mon Respect, mon Retour,*  
*Tous mes Vœux, s'il en est qui tiennent lieu d'Amour.*  
*Pardonne—Je m'égare—Epreuve mon Courage.*  
*Peut être une Espagnole eut promis d'avantage :*  
*Elle eut pu prodiguer les Charmes de ses Pleurs.*  
*Je n'ai point leurs Attraits, & je n'ai point leurs*  
*Mœurs.*

*Ce Cœur simple, & formé des Mains de la Nature,*  
*En voulant s'adoucir, redouble ton Injure :*  
*Mais, enfin, c'est à toi d'essayer désormais*  
*Sur ce Cœur indompté la Force des Bienfaits.*

By such a Change in thy inhuman Breast,  
 By such a pleasing Force thou changest mine.  
 Your Right secures you my Respect, and Faith,  
 And all my Vows too, if they can charm like Love.  
 Forgive me, I shall be betray'd by Fear,  
 To promise till I overcharge my Power.  
 Yet try what Changes Gratitude can make.  
 A *Spanish* Dame perhaps wou'd promise more.  
 Profuse in Charms, and prodigal of Tears,  
 Wou'd promise all things—and forget them all.  
 But I have weaker Charms, and simpler Arts;  
 Guileless of Soul, and left as Nature form'd me.  
 I err, in honest Innocence of Aim,  
 And seeking to compose, inflame you more.  
 But to what Lengths I may be tam'd—by Benefits,  
 'Tis in your Power to try, not mine to tell.

I own to thee, that I thought this a charming Passage; the uncultivated Nature which is predominant in *Alzira's* Petitions, and the Contempt which she affects of the Dissimulation and Disguise of the *European* Ladies, strike the Mind, and attach it voluntarily to Manners and Customs, which however imperfectly known, affect by their Singularity. I wou'd have a Poet always apply himself to find out some Subject which may furnish him with new Ideas. *Voltaire* has hit upon the Secret of making *Alzira* say a thousand bright Things; and while she is in a doubt concerning the Truth of the Religion which she has embrac'd, she explains in six Verses what the Learned have hardly been able to comprize in huge Volumes.

*Grand Dieu! Condui Zamore au milieu des Deserts.  
 Ne serois tu le Dieu, que d'un autre Univers?  
 Les seuls Europeens sont-ils nez pour te plaire?  
 Es-tu Tiran d'un Monde, & de l'autre le Pere?*



*Les Vainqueurs, les Vaincus, tous les foibles Humains,  
Sont ils également l'Ouvrage de tes Mains?*

Great God ! Be *Zamor's* Guide amidst his Deserts.  
Would'st thou be God of the other World alone?  
Are th' *Europeans* only born to please thee?  
Art thou one World's Tyrant, and the other's Fa-  
ther?

Victors, and Vanquish'd, all the human Race,  
Are not they equally thy Handy-Work?

Methinks I hear some ridiculous Bigot exclaim-  
ing against these moving Passages, and treating the  
Author as a *Manichee*. Ignorant Creature ! not to  
know that the only way for a Writer to raise the  
Beauty of one Character, is to charge Imperfections  
upon another, in order to shew the Contrast ; and  
that *Alzira's* Doubts give a Lustre to the establish'd  
Faith of *Monteza*.

I conclude my Extract of this Piece, dear *Isaac*,  
with a Passage worthy to be engrav'd in Letters of  
Gold ; a Maxim which Sovereigns should always  
have in their View ; which the Inquisitors, Perse-  
cutors, and other Monsters of human Nature ought  
to meditate profoundly, and which all Mankind  
ought to follow.

*Mais, renoncer aux Dieux, que l'on étoit dans son Cœur,  
C'est le Crime d'un Lâche, & non pas une Erreur.  
C'est trahir a la fois, sous un Masque hypocrite,  
Et le Dieu qu'on préfère, & le Dieu que l'on quitte.  
C'est mentir au Ciel même, a l'Univers, a soi.*

Had I renounc'd my Gods, yet still believ'd 'em ;  
That had not been an Error, but a Crime  
That had been mocking Heaven's whole Host at  
once ;

(The Powers I quitted, and the Power I chose.)  
 A Change like that had disciplin'd the Tongue  
 To lye to the whole World, to Heaven, and Con-  
 science.

What Misfortunes, what Guilt might Men have escap'd, if they had been convinc'd of these Principles! For want of this, how much Blood that has been spilt, has been spilt unjustly!

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers inlighten thy Heart and thy Understanding, load thee with Blessing and Wealth, and give thee a numerous Family.



## LETTER LXV.

From JACOB BRITO, at Milan, to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.

**T**IS a Fortnight ago that I left *Naples*, and am endeavouring to get as soon as I can to *Switzerland*; yet I shall stay a few Days at *Milan*. Since I have been here, I have perceiv'd a great many things that are worth a Traveller's Attention. The City is large, and well built; the *French* and *Piedmontese*, in whose Power it is to be for some time longer, are not much lov'd by the Inhabitants; and the jealous Husbands especially sigh for the happy Moment when the *Germans* are to come and deliver them from those troublesome Gallants.

Since the *French* became Masters of *Milan*, Wine has very much fallen in its Price, and the Number of Christnings is considerably augmented. A great many Husbands who never had Children, and thought  
 their

their Wives barren, now enjoy the tender Appellation of Father; which happy Multiplication the Zealots ascribe to the Intercessions of *Charles Borromeo*. The Astrologers say, 'tis owing to the happy Influences of the Stars\*; but the jealous Husbands think that the *French* have much more Share in it, than either the Saints or the Cœlestial Globes. They are therefore impatient for the Return of the *Germans*, and I doubt not but they will cause public Thanksgivings to be observ'd upon their Arrival, to those Saints in whom they place the greatest Trust.

The *Milanese*, as well as the other *Italians*, have very great Protectors or Patrons with the Deity, to whom they have built magnificent Temples. The principal Advocates whom they have chosen in the Cœlestial Court, formerly liv'd in their City. Of these *Clou* † (which signifies a Nail) and *Charles Borromeo* are the most distinguish'd. On the Festival of *Clou*, his Shrine is laid upon the high Altar of the Dome, and the People come from all Parts to prostrate themselves before it. A Multitude of Folks that are possess'd with the Devil, come and put themselves into the most astonishing Postures before the Saint, torment themselves, cry, howl, and, in short, act the same Part at *Milan*, as

\* The *Almanac de Milan*, a famous one.

† This requires some Explanation: *Jacob Brito* hearing some Talk at *Milan* about the Holy Nail, thought it was really a Saint, which had formerly existed in Flesh and Bones; but this Saint is only a great Piece of Iron, deify'd by Avarice, on pretence that it was one of those which had been drove into the real Cross. There's half a hundred of those Nails in *Europe*; and every Church that has one, does not scruple to cry down the rest, in order to prove its own to be genuine.

the

the Convulsionaries do at *Paris*. Their Diseases are cured after a very pleasant Manner: A Priest throws some Flowers at them, which he plucks out of those that adorn the Saint's Shrine; and the Devils, sensible of the Smell of the Pinks and Violets, become good-natur'd, peaceable, complaisant, enter into Conversation with the Priests, and talk to them very courteously. There is nothing so engaging to the Curiosity of a Philosopher, as to be a Spectator of those Scenes. The Enthusiasms of the Priestesses of *Delphi* were nothing to it. Among those People so possess'd, who perform the same Ceremony every Year, there are some Persons to whom they teach several Words of different Languages; the Priests make a great Handle of this Artifice, for the common People are very much surpriz'd to hear a Peasant talk in a Language which he never learn'd.

Some time ago, a *Nazarene* Doctor, who was interrogating one of those People possess'd by the Devil, forgot the Questions which he was to ask him, and propos'd some to him that related to one of his Brethren; who understanding the Watchword, thought he address'd himself to him, and answer'd for his Comrade. This Adventure somewhat astonish'd the Doctor; but he quickly recover'd from his Surprise, which was only observ'd by those who knew the Ridicule and Fraud of those infernal Comedies.

The *Milanese* are altogether as superstitious as their Neighbours; but they accommodate their Devotions to their Pleasures, and as the Saints Days procure them a great deal of Diversion, they take as much of it as they can, especially the Fair Sex, the Fryars, the Gallants, the Musicians, and the Sellers of Lemonade.

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The Carnival at *Milan* is almost as gay as it is at *Venice*; that's a Season when all People abandon themselves to Pleasure, and even the Nuns in the Convents take their Share of it; for they act Comedies one among another, dress themselves like Harlequins and Scaramouches in Linsey-woolsey, and at that time Sister *Dorothy* and Sister *Angelica* become Buffoons and Jackpuddings. From *Christmas* till *Lent*, People croud to the Convents to look through the Grates, and see those Companies of Female Comedians, who acquit themselves wonderfully, and often play their Parts better than real Comedians.

The Monks are in nothing inferior to the Nuns as to Masquerading, and they also act Farces publicly in their Convents; the Father Prior acts the Cuckold of a Turn-spit; the young Noviciates act the Parts of *Angelica* and *Spineta* to a Prodigy; and every Soul, even to the Lay-Brothers, is for sharing in the public Diversions. These Monks even extend the Art farther; they go to private Houses to act their Parts, and for a Treat you may have a Band of *Franciscans* or *Augustinians* at your House a whole Afternoon; nay, you may pick and choose among all the different Orders of Monks.

Notwithstanding these private Companies of Performers, there are several others of true Comedians dispers'd up and down the City. The chief Theatre, which is taken up by the Opera, is magnificent, and the Decorations pompous. The *Milaneses* have a particular way of applauding their Actors and Actresses; they compose Sonnets, or else get some Hackney-Poets to write them; and when a Virtuoso or a Virtuosa has sung perfectly well, they scatter those printed Sonnets all about the Theatre. These Songs are all of 'em in praise  
of

of some Actor; and it often happens that in their Poetry, *Julius Cæsar*, *Tamerlane*, and *Mahomet II.* are but Striplings compar'd to Signiors *Scalfi*, *Farenili*, *Sinesini*, and other halves of Men, who have paid very dear for the Advantage of a clear Voice. The *English* have another manner of applauding, which is much more pleasing to the Actors: Instead of Verses, they scatter Purfes full of Ducats; and the Gentlemen Virtuofos are not so fond of Glory, as to prefer Sonnets to Pistoles. They are fain to be content however with the former in *Italy*, where they can't do better; for there's no *Milanese* that has a Temptation to applaud after the *English* manner.

There are few Nobility so covetous as those of this Country; they have learnt the way to be saving, and to divert themselves at a small Expence; they get the Charges of all the public Diversions defray'd by a Society of Citizens and Merchants who are call'd *Faquini*, because they open the Carnival by a Masquerade, in which they are dress'd like Peasants. The Nobles lend their Palaces for the Entertainments given by the *Faquini*, but they don't contribute a Shilling to the Expence of them; and some of 'em would be glad to let their Houses out to pay the Rent, if they thought the thing wou'd not be known.

There is no Place next to *Naples*, where Assassinations are committed so safe and cheap as at *Milan*. 'Tis true the *Germans* and *French* are very much against such sort of Bargains; nevertheless there are Numbers of People easy enough to be found, who for a Pistole will deliver you from an Enemy. When 'tis attended with any Difficulty or Delay, in order to cut all Ceremony short, they wait near some Church for the Person they intend

tend to Murder ; and after they have done the Job, they go very coolly into the Church, and make it their Sanctuary.

I have made enquiry, dear *Monceca*, into the Origin of that Immunity which has been granted to the Temples of several different Religions, and after serious Consideration of the Motives that occasion'd this Custom, I don't find any other than the Ambition of the Priests: Those among the *Egyptians*, the *Greeks*, and the *Israelites* our Forefathers, who had the Care of the Divine Worship, were every whit as ambitious as those among the Moderns: They thought to gain the Respect of private Men, by giving them a Sanctuary in any Diseases that might happen to them, but never distinguish'd between the Crime and the Misfortune, so that the Assassin found as much Security in the Temple, as the Man that shed Blood involuntarily. The *Nazarene* Monks retain'd this Custom in Countries where they had the entire Rule. They also granted the same Privileges to their Churches and Monasteries, as were indulg'd to the Palaces of Sovereigns and their Ambassadors. But the Rights which they arrogated to themselves were so abused by them, that they became noxious to Civil Society ; there was no Crime ever so great, but found a Sanctuary among them ; whereas Princes, who have a Power to grant Immunities, only protect those Persons, whose Faults are pardonable, and not inconsistent with the Character of the Man of Honour. An Ambassador would certainly not have given any Shelter to *Cartouche* ; on the contrary, there's not one but wou'd have caused him to be arrested. But that infamous Robber, in spite of his Crimes, wou'd have met with entire Safety in *Italy* in one of the most paultry Chapels. Alas ! dear *Monceca*, is it the Pleasure of the Duty that

his Altars should give a Sanction to Wickedness? Is it not absurd to build Temples to the Almighty, only to furnish Retirement and Shelter for Villains? How cruel is that Superstition, which under the Veil of Piety gives such Authority to Guilt? Happy are those *Nazarene* Nations which have not given into this Error, and which punish Transgressions even in the Sanctuary.

*Milan* is furnish'd with as good, and as powerful Relics as any Town in *Italy*; those of *Charles Borromeo*, which are the most considerable, are kept in a Coffin made of several Pieces of Rock Crystal, join'd together by Plates of Silver gilt. The Body of this *Nazarene* is still to be seen entire thro' the Crystal; indeed notwithstanding the extraordinary Care that was taken in embalming it, Part of his Nose has by length of Time receiv'd some Damage. A Monk of whom I ask'd the Reason, assur'd me that God had permitted this, because the Saint in his Life-time had been too fond of sweet Odours, and that the Loss of one half of his Nose was the Punishment of his Sensuality. If the Deity were thus to stigmatise the Failings of all the *Nazarene* Saints, I really believe there are few of the canonised Friars that wou'd have a Tongue left in their Mouths, for they have been generally prodigious Germandisers, and great Lyars.

If the *Jews*, dear *Monceca*, had a Taste for Relics, we might find some at *Milan* that wou'd suit our Synagogues perfectly well. *Moses's* Rod is kept in the Cathedral of this City: 'Tis true, that it is not prov'd to Demonstration to be the same Rod which was made use of by that Prophet, for they slew another at *Rome* in the Church of *St. John de Lateran*; therefore the surest way not to be mistaken would be to buy both, or else charitably to suppose, what is very possible, that the Legislator had



had two Rods. In the the collecting of Reliques of such Antiquity, one must not stand upon Trifles, nor be too critical, but take the whole in the Lump as the *Nazarenes* do. If we were minutely to examine every thing that is said touching *Moses's* Rod, we shou'd be at least as much confounded as they are. The Rabbi *Abarbanel* has wrote a long Dissertation upon this Rod, in which he tells a great many extravagant things, and affirms magisterially, that *Moses* carried it to the Mountain where he died, and that it was laid in that Prophet's Tomb. I cou'd wish that the Rabbi *Abarbanel* wou'd do me the Favour to tell me, who reveal'd this Fact to him; till then we may safely make shift with the two Rods which the *Nazarenes* have; and if a third appears, it is but buying that too.

There is also a Relique of much more Note in another Church\*; 'tis the Serpent which *Moses* set up in the Desert. As to this Relique there are not two of the Sort as there are of the Rod; but let the *Nazarenes* say what they will of it, I question whether it was cotemporary with that Prophet. I shou'd rather take it for a Memorial of some extraordinary Event, as the Goose of the Capitol. Therefore I wou'd not advise our Synagogues to offer to trouble themselves with this Piece of Antiquity, which I think to be *Roman*, rather than *Egyptian*. This famous Serpent, which is of Brass, is placed upon a Column of Marble. How stark blind are some Men! Let's pity them, dear *Monceca*, rather than despise them. Folly is the very Appendix of Human Nature. Happy are they to whom Heaven has granted a little more Understanding than to some of their Fellow-Creatures.

\* In the Vestry of the Church of St. *Ambrose*.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*; as soon as I get into *Switzerland* I shall write to thee. Live content and happy.



## LETTER LXVI.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

SINCE I heard from thee last, I doubt not but thou art arriv'd in *Egypt*; and I write to thee with a firm Confidence that there my Letter will find thee. Our Friend, *Jacob Brito*, who is on the Point of leaving *Italy*, and going to *Switzerland*, has made very good Remarks in his Travels, which he has been so kind as to communicate to me. I hope thou wilt not have less Complaisance, and that thou wilt communicate to us both every thing that thou findest remarkable or considerable in *Egypt*.

I shall endeavour to get as much Improvement as possible by my stay at *Paris*. I was yesterday at the public Court of the Parliament, and heard two of the most celebrated Advocates of the Kingdom plead: I was very much pleased with their Speeches, which were really beautiful; the Style was clear and accurate, and so eloquent, that all the Audience applauded those two able Advocates. Yet to compare *French* Oratory with that of *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*, their Merit appears to be much inferiour to that of the Antients; for they have neither their Majesty, nor the Sublimity of their Genius, nor their Fire of Imagination. Being  
fully

fully convinc'd, after Inquiry into the Cause of this Difference, that it cou'd not be this, namely that *Cicero* and *Demosthenes* were Men not to be match'd, because Nature had not forgot how she form'd their Brains, I discover'd that the Advantages of the antient Orators were owing to their Situation, and to the Subjects of which they treated.

There are some Subjects which spontaneously furnish the Mind with Ideas that are grand, sublime, and magnificent, and which don't need the Disposition of Phrases, and the Harmony of Words to elevate the Mind, since the plainest Terms are sufficient to express them. In speaking of the Divinity, for Instance, all the Ideas which the Understanding receives of him, engage it, seize it, and in a Manner transport it beyond its Sphere. Then the most common Diction, provided it be plain and distinct, and clearly conveys the Ideas, is sufficient to give Energy to the Discourse, and the plainest Eloquence becomes sublime. Of the Truth of this, we have a decisive Instance in the Book of *Genesis*, where God says, *Let there be Light*; and *there was Light*. *Gen. cap. v. ver. 3.* In this Expression, which even the Pagans own to be sublime, the Obedience of the Thing created seems to conform to the Will of the Creator in the same Moment. What Ideas are there not convey'd to the Mind in such simple Terms? *The Power of God, the Creation of Light, Clearness form'd by a single Word, and granted to the Universe by the Goodness of an immense and omnipotent Being.* The Choice of Words, and an affected Turn of the Phrase, wou'd have diminish'd the sublime Simplicity of this Passage.

If it be confess'd that the Subject is of infinite Service to the Orator, and can in some measure render him eloquent without the Help of Art, it

will be easy to discover the true Reason of the Superiority of the Antients over the Moderns.

An Advocate of the Parliament of *Paris* has a notable Cause to defend, when he pleads for the Fortune or Estate of a private Man. If it be an Affair wherein any Person of Distinction is concern'd, 'tis the Subject of a celebrated Plea. But whatsoever Suit an Advocate may defend at *Paris*, there is not one Cause, the Merits of which stripp'd of its Ornaments, can inspire the Audience with a certain Greatness of Mind, seize their Attention at once, and raise it to Notions which are in a manner unknown to them. What Mind can help being affected, when an Orator says that he pleads for the Fortune of a King? The Beginning of *Cicero's* Oration for King *Dejotarus*, and the whole Exordium of the said Plea, which is a Master-piece of Eloquence, is not so much oblig'd for its Beauty to the Assistance of Art, as to the Dignity of the Subject. Let an Advocate prepossess his Audience in the sublimest Terms, let him plead for a Frenchman oppress'd with the Stripes of Fortune, a Victim to the Capriciousness of Destiny; were he to set him off as a Man endow'd with Virtues that put his Persecutors to the Blush; and were he to interest the Gods themselves as well as Men in the Arret which is to decide the Fate of his Client, he may by the Choice of harmonious Terms, and by the beautiful Cadence of his Phrases, strike the Ear agreeably, but he will never engage the Mind, and never raise it to so high a Degree, as that Orator will, who only says, *I plead for the Fortune of a King, &c.* There's a natural Sublimity in these Words; they offer above twenty Ideas to the Understanding; they are expressive of the Grandeur of the Subject treated of; they represent to the Mind  
a King.

a King, who is the Judge of others, oblig'd to defend himself, and in short they engage it in Favour of the Person attack'd, on account of the Dignity and Majesty of his Rank.

As lofty as is the Beginning of the Oration for *Dejotarus*, it perhaps cost *Cicero* less Pains than the Preamble of his Oration for *Archias*. But in the first he pleaded for a King, and in the second for a Poet. The Beginning of the first *Catiline* Oration is judg'd by all Mankind to be a Piece of perfect Eloquence; I grant it is, but what was the Subject of it? What was the Reason of that celebrated Apostrophe of the Orator? No less than a Republic which was Mistress of the World, in Danger of immediate Destruction from a Rebel.

The Dignity of the Subjects treated of frequently determines the Degree of the Orator's Eloquence; and no wonder therefore when we see in *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* such Passages as strike and engage us more strongly than those we meet with in the Moderns. They were neither more learned, nor more witty than the latter, but they went upon Subjects which furnish'd both Wit and Learning, and led naturally to the Sublime. It wou'd be easy to shew that in the ordinary Causes pleaded by *Cicero*, he is not superiour to *Patru* and *Er-rard*; and if both the latter had liv'd at *Rome*, they wou'd not have been inferiour to him in any thing.

The Advocates General of the Parliaments have it more in their Power, than meer Advocates, to enjoy the Advantages of the *Greek* and *Roman* Orators; for they are sometimes employ'd in Causes of Weight and Importance to the Good of the State, and in the Discourses which they make in their Remonstrances, they are capable of speaking with a certain Dignity, which comes up pretty

near to the *Roman* Grandeur. But their Genius is impoverish'd and weaken'd by a Number of trifling Niceties, and an insignificant Detail of Formalities. 'Tis with the *French* Magistrates as with the Scholastic Philosophers; and take away their common beaten Maxims, they know not where to fix themselves. Were it not for *Aristotle*, a Regent of *Philosophy* is apt to think that the Light of Nature only serves to mislead us; and the generality of the Gownmen wou'd not presume to hold an Opinion which they don't find in *Cujas*, *Moulin*, and *Argentre*.

Among the Antients, the Freedom of Thinking was one of the principal Causes of Eloquence. The *Greeks* and the *Romans* were not so fond of leaning upon the Authority of other Men, as of building upon Reasons that seem'd to convince their own private Judgment. There are not so many Quotations in all the Pleadings of *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*, as in the first Page of those of *le Maitre*. Of what Importance is it, that such an Opinion was maintain'd by such a Doctor, such a Father of the Church, or such a Lawyer? If it be contrary to Reason, and the public Benefit, it ought to be no more valued than that of an Ignoramus.

'Tis a Folly to go about to justify the Failings of some Men; for what is good in them, there's an absolute Necessity of commending them; but to deify their Defects is ridiculous Idolatry. What! because forsooth *du Moulin* and *d'Argentre* are not agreed in certain Questions, must I not dare to determine in a Point which to me appears clear and evident? Must I spend whole Years rather before I come to a Determination? An Inquiry so insignificant, blunts the penetrating Faculty of the Mind, and exhausts its Vivacity and Force.

The *English* take a surer way to attain to the Sciences; they only grant their Consent to Truth. The Authority of all the Authors both antient and modern, cou'd not force them not to make use of their Reason. They judge of Things by the Ideas which they have of themselves, and not by the Notions of other People. The Liberty which the *English* Nation enjoys, might also be a very great Assistance to such as apply themselves to Eloquence. A Speaker at the Head of the Commons, who talks for the Welfare and Safety of his Country, who informs the Sovereign of the Necessities of his Subjects, who renews the Assurances of that mutual Alliance, and reciprocal Conduct between the Prince and the People, treats of Matters which are of equal Importance to the Subject of the *Greek* and *Roman* Orators. It wou'd not therefore be an extraordinary thing to find Eloquence carry'd to a farther Degree in *England* than it is in *France*. Ambition itself may be of very great Service towards it. An able Advocate at *Paris* gains five or six hundred thousand Livres at most in his whole Life-time; but be he ever so eloquent, he has only a daily Salary for his Learning and his Talents, and that's all the Reward he must expect. In *England* many Honours are annex'd to Persons of a distinguish'd Genius. An able Orator may be chose for the Advocate of his Country; and his Eloquence promotes him to a Rank in Life, which nothing but pure Merit can lead the way to. If the Offices of President *au Mautier* in *France* were bestow'd upon those Advocates that distinguish'd themselves most, I doubt not but the Bar wou'd make a more illustrious Figure than it does now. The Ambition of attaining to the Chief Office of the Magistracy wou'd be a greater Incitement to the Study of Eloquence, and the Advocate when he came once to know that

he was born and cut out for great Employments, wou'd entertain greater and more noble Ideas.

The Orators are to blame, as well as others of the Learned, in setting Money up for their Mark, rather than Glory. I have been acquainted with a great many Authors in my time; and when I have talk'd to them of some of their Works which I thought were not so accurate as they should be, they said, *What wou'd you have us to do? The Booksellers give us but half a Pistole a Sheet. What can one perform that is good at that Price?* 'Tis the same, I find, with the Advocates, *I have but ten Pistoles Fee for a Pleading, says one, shall I sweat and toil in a Cause for such a poor Sum as that? I plead as I am paid, and the Merchandize I give is worth the Money I receive.*

'Tis impossible therefore that an Orator in France can apply himself to perfect his Art, and to get an Estate at the same time. It must be his Option either to resolve to be poor, or not to produce any but imperfect Pieces. 'Tis impossible that the great number of Causes which many of the Advocates undertake, shou'd be defended as they ought; for one Advocate often pleads more Causes in a Year, than Cicero and Demosthenes did in the whole Course of their Lives.

Eloquence has been carry'd much farther in the Pulpit, than at the Bar. The Composers of Sermons, Panegyrics, and funeral Orations, were either in eminent Posts, or else expected that they shou'd be advanc'd to such by means of their Talents: Their Care was to please, and not to amass Wealth; and to perfect their Talents was their only Study. They had another Advantage also over the Orators of the Bar: All their Subjects furnish'd them with a vast Fund of Matter, which was sublime, and enough to elevate the Mind by being barely contemplated.



contemplated. Is any thing more grand and majestic than the Explanation of the Orders and Decrees of the Deity? Any thing that touches, strikes, or more engages Men than the principal Rules of Morality, and the fundamental Points of their Religion? *Bourdaloue*, *Bossuet*, *Flecher*, &c. were much more perfect in their kind than *Patru*, *le Maitre*, and *Errard*, yet they were not more eloquent than the latter; but their Subjects were more grand and extensive; and they cou'd afford as much Time to polish their Works, as was necessary to perfect them. The Case is not the same with the Advocates: *Patru* who was for preferring Glory to Riches, and who content with a Reputation, went thro' a certain Number of Pleadings with very great Care, both liv'd and died a poor Man. He was assisted by a Poet, whose Generosities repair'd the Injuries done to him by the Caprices of Fortune \*.

What a Scandal is it to the *French* that such a Man as *Patru* was almost ready to be starv'd, while *Chapellain*, and a Parcel of sorry Authors were allow'd considerable Pensions? This, dear *Isaac*, is an affecting Instance of those Prejudices, and that ill Taste which prevail sometimes in the most polite and the wisest Ages. That of *Lewis XIV.* was fertile in Wits, and he was a Monarch that rewarded them like a generous magnificent Prince; but he almost forgot one of the greatest Men in his Kingdom, while he heap'd his Favours on the worst of all Poets †.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; live content and happy, and let me hear from thee oftner.

\* *M. Patru* wanting Money, had a Mind to sell his Library; *Boileau* hearing the Resolution of this poor Scholar, bought his Library, but would never take the Books till *Patru* was dead.

† *Chapellain* had very considerable Pensions allow'd him to his dying Day.



## L E T T E R LXVII.

From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
JACOB BRITO, at Geneva.

THE Manners of the *Parisian* Nuns, dear Brito, are much more regular than those of the *Venetians*; not that they think their Condition more agreeable than the others, but the Check and Restraint which they live under at *Paris*, make them virtuous in spite of themselves, and support that Discretion of theirs, which cou'd not resist the Temptations that are too strong for the *Venetian* Ladies. The Nunneries in this City are Prisons full of innocent Victims, devoted to Avarice or Ambition. The *French*, who have Good-nature and Compassion for the Unfortunate, depart from that Character in nothing but the cruel Use which they make of those Convents.

Half of the Fathers at *Paris* are as barbarous to their Daughters as certain People of *Peru*, who keep the Women they take in War for their Concubines, maintain the Children they have by them as delicately as possible, till they are thirteen Years of Age, and then eat them\*. The Practice of the *French* is much the same; when they have three or four Daughters, they get a Husband for the Eldest, or for the Favourite, and strictly confine all the rest, whom they decree from their Birth to suffer a thousand Torments. *I don't think*, says *Montaigne*, *that 'tis so cruel to eat a Man after he*

\* The History of the *Incas*, lib. i. cap. 12.

*is dead, as when he is alive.* I am of his Opinion, dear *Brito*, and to tell thee my real Sentiment, I would sooner forgive a Father for killing his Infant the Moment it was born, than to nurse it to such an Age, to prepare it for the Suffering of horrid Torments as long as it liv'd; for that is really the Case of most of the Nuns: And of this I can assure thee from my own Knowledge, having been many times in Convents with the *Chevalier de Maisin*, who made me acquainted with two or three Kinswomen of his, that are doom'd to pass all their Days in Torments.

I said once to a certain Nun, ' You are not so unhappy as you imagine; while you are sequestred from the World and its Perplexities, your Life slides on serenely; nothing ought to trouble you; you are not disturb'd by any Family Cares. In short, you have the very three things in which the chiefest Happiness consists, *viz.* Virtue, Health, and Competency. You are mistaken, *said she*, I have neither of these three Ingredients. As for my Virtue, 'tis a Virtue *per Force*, and not what I have acquir'd by Choice and Pre-engagement; 'tis therefore rather a Constraint which hinders me from submitting to the Temptation, without depriving me of the Inclination, than a real Hatred that I have to Sin. The Grates are a Guard to my Chastity and Modesty; yet I don't find my Heart the less tender. Of what avail is therefore a Virtue, which can be of no service towards calming the Mind? a Virtue, which is such no longer, than while it has not the Liberty of becoming Vice?

' My Health has been destroy'd for a long time: What with Melancholy, the Regret for being confin'd without deserving it, and what with the Despair of being restor'd to Liberty, my  
' Blood

‘ Blood is corrupted; I have generally such a sinking of Spirits, that I am ready to die, besides frequent terrible Fits of the Head-ache; and before I have seen much of the Winter, my Physicians tell me, that I shan’t live till the Spring; yet I have often baffled their Predictions, tho’ by what Accident, I know not.

‘ ’Tis true I have what is necessary, but what does it avail to Happiness, for the Body to be nourished, and the Mind only fed with Gall and Wormwood? Moreover, how many Plagues and Mortifications do I suffer for this Competency? Being forc’d Day and Night to obey the Call of a Bell, I scarce have closed my Eye-lids, but I must rise, tho’ it be as dark as pitch, to hasten to Mattins, where for an Hour I mumble some Latin Prayers of which I hardly understand one Word; and in three or four Hours after I have got to bed again, I must return to the Offices. My whole Life, in short, is spent in reciting my Breviary, and in hearing the dull Speeches of my Lady Abbess, a fantastical, moody, odd, peevish and superstitious Creature, like all old Women, who offers to God the Torments which she makes me suffer\*.

‘ Consider now, Sir, *continued this Nun*, if my Condition is so serene as you imagine, and whether I enjoy the three main Ingredients of sovereign Happiness? I own, *said I*, that I am deceiv’d in the Notion I had of it; but for God’s sake pray tell me, how you could find in your Heart to make Vows that wou’d render you so unhappy? I will now, *said she*, give you the History of the Vocation of three fourths of the Nuns to

\* *Offre à Dieu les Tourmens qu’elle me fait souffrir.*  
Boileau Sat. x.

‘ the Monastic State; for they are call’d to it in the  
‘ the same Manner as I was.

‘ As soon as I came to be six or seven Years of  
‘ Age, my Mother, who was absolutely determin’d  
‘ that I shou’d go into a Convent, whipp’d me  
‘ regularly twice a-day; the least Fault that I com-  
‘ mitted was punish’d with the utmost Severity, and  
‘ with this Rigour was I treated till I was nine  
‘ Years old. At length I was told that I was to go  
‘ into a Convent to be a Boarder there with one  
‘ of my Aunts who was a Nun, and had been in-  
‘ form’d of the state of Life for which I was de-  
‘ sign’d. The two first Months that I pass’d in  
‘ the Monastery, I thought my self in Paradise.  
‘ My Aunt, instead of Slaps o’ the Face, gave me  
‘ Sugar-plums; there was now no more Chastise-  
‘ ment, no more Reprimands; I was treated with  
‘ extraordinary Tendernefs, and bless’d the happy  
‘ Moment that I enter’d the Convent. My Mo-  
‘ ther sometimes took me out with her to dine at  
‘ her House; but those very Days were Days of  
‘ Sorrow and Affliction, for I always return’d in  
‘ Tears to my Aunt, who comforted me for the  
‘ Cuffs and Chidings which my Mother gave me  
‘ in abundance. In fine, she told me, when I was  
‘ sixteen Years of Age, that I must now take my  
‘ Choice, that is to say, return to my Mother, or  
‘ commence a Nun. You will easily judge that I  
‘ did not hesitate which to do, and I said I wou’d  
‘ take the Veil. My Mother before she consented  
‘ to my Option, observ’d great Ceremony; she re-  
‘ fused at first to grant me my Request, and I was  
‘ actually oblig’d to intreat her, for the very thing  
‘ that she long’d most of all to grant me. At  
‘ last, after many Petitions she said she was wil-  
‘ ling that I shou’d be a Nun; but that I might  
‘ never repent my Vocation, she added, that she  
‘ with’d

‘ wish’d first to shew me the World a little,  
‘ that I might not determine my self without  
‘ knowing why or wherefore. She forc’d me to  
‘ go for a Fortnight to her House; and really  
‘ that Fortnight fully confirm’d me in my Purpose.  
‘ She made me rise every Morning at six a-Clock:  
‘ A curst Jade of a Milliner, on pretence of setting me off suitable to a Miss of my Quality,  
‘ pull’d my Locks for three or four Hours together: A pair of Stays was made for me in which  
‘ I had scarce Liberty to breathe. There’s a Necessity, said my Mother, for dressing with Care,  
‘ to go abroad. She carry’d me to pass the Day  
‘ in some Assemblies of old Gossips, where I sat  
‘ with a demure Countenance for five or six Hours  
‘ together.

‘ At last came the happy Day, when ’twas in my  
‘ Power to chuse either the World or a Convent.  
‘ I quitted my Stays and all my Finery, bid adieu  
‘ for ever to that devilish Milliner, and came back  
‘ to my Aunt. How happy, *said I to her*, is it to  
‘ be free from that Constraint of which so many  
‘ Women are Idolizers! What? is this a World  
‘ that People shou’d ever be sorry to be separated  
‘ from! They that are so, must either be very silly,  
‘ or know but little of it.

‘ Having these Ideas, I made Vows that nothing  
‘ shou’d ever divorce me from this House. I spent  
‘ my first Years in Tranquility, but when I came  
‘ to be nineteen or twenty Years of Age, I began to  
‘ find that I had been deluded. The People of  
‘ the World, whom I saw in the Parlour, scatter’d  
‘ the Mist from my Eyes; my Heart felt certain  
‘ Motions of which it was not Master; the singing  
‘ of the Birds, the Sight of Men, and of my Self  
‘ too, when I turn’d to my Looking-glass; and  
‘ above all, my own Heart told me that I was not  
‘ made

' made to be insensible : But alas ! to what Purpose  
 ' shou'd I have been sensible ! My Desires wou'd  
 ' only have been an Aggravation of my Misfortune.  
 ' I endeavour'd at first to dispel my Uneasiness by  
 ' reading ; but the more Discoveries I made, the  
 ' more was my Mind disturb'd. The Books that  
 ' pleas'd me most, were Romances ; of which I  
 ' was fond to the last Degree, so that I bedew'd  
 ' the most tender Passages with my Tears. A Lady  
 ' of my Acquaintance was so complaisant as to lend  
 ' me the Books, and I soon exhausted her Library.  
 ' My Vexation for having quitted the World, and  
 ' for being the melancholy Victim of the Ambition  
 ' and Avarice of my Family, has made my Life a  
 ' Burthen to me. I expect nothing to set me at  
 ' Liberty but Death, which I wish for, much ra-  
 ' ther than fear. My Mother at the same time is  
 ' as unhappy as myself ; she had made a Sacrifice of  
 ' me for the better Settlement of my eldest Sister in  
 ' Marriage, who died a few Days after the Cere-  
 ' mony ; so that my Family has no Child left but  
 ' me, and the Estate goes to a remote collateral  
 ' Branch which she hates, and has Reason to com-  
 ' plain of. It seems as if Heaven had taken care to  
 ' revenge my Cause.'

I know not, dear *Brito*, what thou think'st of  
 this barbarous Practice of the *Nazarene* Papists, in  
 confining their Daughters. But, in my opinion, he  
 must have the Heart of a *Cannibal* who invented a  
 Custom, which, under a Pretence of devoting Souls  
 to God, renders a Number of innocent People for  
 ever unhappy. I have often talk'd with the *Naza-  
renes* concerning this Usage, so contrary to Reason  
 and the Law of Nature. They endeavour to justify  
 it by Reasons of State ; *If*, say they, *all the Daugh-  
ters were to be married, Families could not support  
themselves in a certain Rank, and they would be oblig'd*

*to make unsuitable Matches.* Wretched Argument! which has no other Foundation than the stupid Vanity of some Nobles infatuated with their Condition; a Vanity as prejudicial as the Plague to the Good of Society. How do the *English*, the *Svedes*, the *Prussians*, the *Danes*, and other Nations do? Are they less attentive to preserve the Privileges of their Nobility, than the *French* or the *Spaniards*? No, surely; but they take more Care not to suffer themselves to be blinded by old Prejudices. If there was no Nun in *France*, a Nobleman indeed would not marry a Girl with a hundred thousand Crowns Fortune; nor, on the other hand, would he be oblig'd to give such a Fortune to his Sister. If we look into Families in general, and consider the Estates that come into, or go out of such Families, during the Course of a Century, we shall find it much the same. Besides, of what Service is it to the State and the Republic, that certain private Men accumulate immense Wealth? This is rather contrary to the Interest of the Public; for 'tis the better for a Kingdom, where its Wealth is divided into just Proportions.

Let us leave the *Nazarenes*, dear *Brito*, in their own Blindness: Is it our Business, whom they so cruelly persecute, to endeavour to open their Eyes? But why shou'd we wonder at it, when they thus persecute even their own Children? Thou can'st not imagine how many Convents of Nuns there are in *France*; every Town is full of 'em, and I fancy they are as numerous as those of the Monks.

Take care of thyself, dear *Brito*; live content and happy; and may Heaven grant thee a large Family, of which thou wilt make a better Use than the *Nazarenes* do.





## L E T T E R LXVIII.

*From* JACOB BRITO, *at Geneva, to* AARON MONCECA, *at Paris.*

'TIS now six Days that I have been at *Geneva*, where my stay has been longer than I intended. The City was formerly very ill built, but for some Years past has been embellish'd with a great Number of new Houses, the Architecture of which is of a very good Taste. The Fortifications of *Geneva* are good and regular; Men are perpetually at work upon them; and the Citizens contribute with Pleasure to the necessary Expences of finishing them, having renew'd the Imposts that were laid for supporting the Expences for ten Years \*. The *Genevese* might spare themselves the Charge of these Fortifications, which cost them an infinite Sum of Money; for their Alliance with *France*, and the Protestant Cantons are their Security against the Insults and Invasions of the *Savoyards*, their common Enemy, from whose Dominion they formerly revolted.

There are two Reasons that oblige *France* and the *Switzers* to protect this Republic; 'tis not the Interest of the *French* to suffer the *Savoyards* and the *Piedmontese* to gain Ground on this Side of the *Alps*; nor is it the Interest of the Protestant Cantons to suffer a City to be destroy'd or subdued, which may

\* This Letter was wrote before the late Troubles in *Geneva*.

be look'd upon as the Metropolis of the *Calvinist* Religion.

Therefore, as both Religion and State-Policy conspire to the Defence of the *Genevese*, I can't imagine what is their Motive for rendering their City as strong as the best Places in *Europe*. I am apt to think that, according to the Rules of true Policy, their Conduct is to be condemn'd. *France* had never been tempted to break her Alliance with *Geneva*, if the latter had still remain'd in its former Condition. Who can tell whether hereafter she will not alter her Mind? To expose a fine Lady to the View of a Gentleman, whose Heart is very apt to be inflam'd, and who may hit upon the Secret of making himself happy, is running a very great Risque. A Day may come, perhaps, when the *Genevese* will repent their having deck'd and trimm'd their City like a new Bride: Some King of *France* may happen to fall in love with her, and to marry her contrary to the Rules. I know that the Protestant Cantons would oppose the Match, but perhaps it wou'd be out of their Power to hinder its taking Effect; and when such a thing is once done, 'twou'd be as difficult to wrest *Geneva* out of the Hands of a *French* Monarch, as it was heretofore for *Menelaus* to rescue his dear *Helen* from the Clutches of the *Trojans*. I have sometimes talk'd jestingly with several of the Citizens about this pretended Union. They told me, they had nothing to fear in that Respect, and that were their City in its utmost State of Perfection, it wou'd not make *France* amends for the Loss of the Alliance of the Protestant Cantons, and for the Charges she wou'd be oblig'd to be at to make herself Mistress of it.

The principal Commerce of *Geneva*, consists in Silks, Books, and several other sorts of Merchandize, of which they send great Quantities into all foreign

foreign Countries; but 'tis remarkable that they print few Books in this City that treat of Matters relating to Protestantism; for it would be a hard matter to vend them, because the Booksellers of *England* and *Holland* have it in their Power to furnish all the *Nazarene* Protestants, and especially the *French* Refugees, with such Books to better Advantage. At *Geneva* therefore they print the Works of all the *Spanish* and *Italian* Doctors; *Sanches*, *Escobar*, *Suares*, *Molina*, *Bellarmin*, *Cajetano*, &c. are oblig'd to the Protestants for perpetuating their Works, which the *Genevese* print just as they are, insomuch that, notwithstanding the Difference of Religion, they never alter a single Word, even in the Books which are the most opposite to theirs.

But the *Nazarene* Papists are seldom so sincere, for they augment or diminish all Writings that pass through their Hands just as pleases them. In the Infancy of Printing, they added a Passage of twenty Lines in the History of *Josephus*, but were afterwards oblig'd to own the Uncertainty of that Passage, which is not to be met with in the Generality of their MSS. The Molinists in the last Century publish'd several Editions of *Janfenius*, in which were the famous Propositions that were condemn'd; but in the former Editions a Man must have the Talent of making White Black to find them there.

The *Genevese*, in the general, are fat and lusty; they are reckon'd ill-natur'd and stingy, but 'tis a Character which they don't deserve, for they are polite and affable, and much more so than all their Neighbours. 'Tis true that they have a Suspicion of Foreigners of the *Römish* Religion; but they are to be pardon'd for mistrusting their most mortal Enemies, who have more than once endeavour'd to lay Snares for them. They are very frugal and  
tem-

temperate, and affect to appear particularly grave ; which is a Passion that often makes them run into a ridiculous Excess.

One Failing, which is common to all the Inhabitants of *Geneva*, is the too violent Hatred they bear to the Popish Religion. They fondly indulge themselves in such Notions as seem to be the most contrary to it ; and when it happens to be the Subject of Conversation, they talk like Enthusiasts. I don't blame them for rejecting a Faith which they think defective and erroneous ; but I cou'd wish they wou'd act more philosophically, and refute Error, without hating the Person that is so unhappy as to be tainted with it.

I think that all Mankind may be consider'd as forming in some sort but one single plain Religion, because they all adore the same Deity, and differ only in point of Worship and Ceremonies. Happy are they who have Rules and Precepts to lead them the nearest way to Felicity ; but because they know more than others, and have more Ways to obtain their Salvation, they ought rather to pity than despise, such as have more Pains to take than themselves to get into the cœlestial Path.

I own to thee, dear *Monceca*, that I can't but compare Heaven to a stately Palace, with four Gates that look to the four different Parts of the World ; one may enter this fine Structure from the East, West, North, and South, but the Roads leading to it are not equally good. We *Jews* walk in the Eastern Road, which the Divinity has made smooth for us. The *Nazarenes* come to it by the Western Road, which is rugged and bad. The *Turks* pass by the North Road, which is still worse ; and all the Religions which are in the *Indies* and *America*, walk in the South Road, which is full of Sloughs, and surrounded with Precipices. In this Road  
great

great Numbers of People lose their Way, but yet there are some that arrive at the cœlestial Palace, notwithstanding the Difficulties of so dangerous a Road.

The *Nazarene* Papists, and our Rabbies, condemn this Opinion; they think that God ought to have no Compassion on a Creature that endeavours to serve him in another Religion. And there is a certain Fryar at *Rome*, that wou'd rather choose to deny the Being of a God, than allow a Place in Heaven to some *Nazarene* Protestants, who have liv'd Examples of the most accomplish'd Virtue in this World.

When an *Italian* wants to obtain any thing of his Family, he threatens to retire to *Geneva*, *me n'andero in Geneva*. And when a Father hears his Son say so, he is as much affected by it as if he said, *I will go to all the Devils*. The *Italians* might easily divest themselves, if they wou'd, of the ill Opinion which they entertain of the *Genevese*. Were they but to make ever so little Enquiry into the Behaviour of the People, they wou'd find that the Conversation of few of them is so pure and rational as theirs is, whom they take to be Devils spew'd out of Hell. There is no Medium in the Decision of the *Italians*; whosoever is not entirely of their Faith, they give headlong to *Belzebub*.

I will now entertain thee with a Story of a *Piedmontese* Preacher, which thou wilt think perhaps is a Fiction, but I assure thee that I was a Witness of the Fact \*. He preach'd upon Hell Torments; and after having enumerated all the Cauldrons, Forks, and Firebrands in that infernal Mansion, he said, ' My Brethren, perhaps you will be curious to know

\* In a little Village call'd *St. Julian*, half a League from *Geneva*, in the Territory of *Savoy*.

‘ the Manner how *Satan* makes the Damned  
 ‘ Wretches pass in Review before him, when he has  
 ‘ a Desire to know the Number of ’em. This  
 ‘ Devil first causes the Drum to be beat by *Mahomet*,  
 ‘ who is his chief Drummer: The *Jews* file  
 ‘ off first with their Rabbies at their Head, and as  
 ‘ they pass along, the Devils run the Prongs of  
 ‘ great Iron Forks into their Fundaments. Then  
 ‘ come the *Turks*, who receive the like Punishment.  
 ‘ After them the *Heretics* pass, dragging heavy  
 ‘ Chains. The Devils pour melted Lead into their  
 ‘ Mouths, to punish them for the Blasphemies they  
 ‘ utter’d in their Life-time against the Saints, and  
 ‘ particularly against St. *Julian*, the Patron of this  
 ‘ Church, whom you see seated in his Niche there,  
 ‘ and whom you don’t take so much Care of as you  
 ‘ ought. I found but six Livres and ten Sous  
 ‘ last Week in his Trunk; and if this be the Case  
 ‘ always, you are in a very fair way, my dear Bre-  
 ‘ thren, to make melted Lead scarce in Hell. Do  
 ‘ you think that St. *Julian*, your Patron, will par-  
 ‘ don you for neglecting him so much? If you do,  
 ‘ you’ll find yourselves very much mistaken. As  
 ‘ for my own part, I furnish him with all the Oil  
 ‘ that I am able, and he is always well lighted.  
 ‘ But the Festival of the Place is just at Hand;  
 ‘ Who is to clothe him? Am I to do it? No tru-  
 ‘ ly, ’tis out of my Power to do it; and I can  
 ‘ assure you, that if you don’t take proper Care, he  
 ‘ will soon be bare-ars’d. You’ll get a fine Cha-  
 ‘ racter, my Brethren, when the Inhabitants of the  
 ‘ Neighbourhood see how you neglect your Patron:  
 ‘ You buy new Petticoats every Day for your  
 ‘ Wives, you grant them what they desire of you;  
 ‘ you do very well; but d’ye think that when a  
 ‘ great Ladle full of melted Lead is popp’d into  
 ‘ your Mouths, they will bring you a Glass of Le-  
 ‘ monade

monade to cool your Throats. Then you will repent of having by your Negligence deserv'd to be rank'd among Heretics: *Alas! Great St. Julian* (you will say) *what a Sinner was I, that I did not give you the Money that I laid out upon Lace for Kate! And that I did not make you a Present of that Piece of Stuff which I brought from the Fair.* All this Repentance will be to no purpose then, dear Brethren; *St. Julian* won't thank you for it, and you must shew your Zeal for him now while you live. I hear some of your complaining that the Harvests are bad, *We have had no Wine* (say you) *this Year; and two Years ago we had no Corn.* I am apt to believe it, Brethren; but it will be much worse for the future. Can you sincerely imagine, that *St. Julian* will address himself to God to ask for Rain, Sun-shine, warm Weather, or cold Weather, as the Case shall require, for People that let him wear a Coat till 'tis three Years old? You are mistaken my Brethren; you will be treated like Heretics, for whom there's no Salvation, and who were from your Mother's Womb the Devil's Inheritance, for as soon as a *Calvinist* or a *Lutheran* comes into the World, the Devil registers him in the other World in his Book, as an Estate that is fallen to him.'

Such Discourses as this render Instruction contemptible, base, and cheap. The Temple where the Word of God ought to be explain'd to Men, becomes a Stage for Mountebanks. 'Tis impertinent to say that the common People ought be preach'd to, in a different Manner from that in which we discourse to People of Learning. A Moral which is pure and easy to be comprehended, may be express'd without stuffing the Mind with a hundred ridiculous Stories invented by Avarice. The

new Coat which this Preacher wanted to be bought for St. *Julian*, might have been productive of another for himself into the Bargain. But what! ought a Priest for vile Lucre to depart from that Character, which puts him in a Rank of Respect? Ought a Minister of God's Word to blend it with gross Fables, enough to disgust not only those who are not of the *Nazarene* Faith, but such also as are most convinc'd of it?

One can't be too careful in examining the Learning and Capacity of those to whom the Liberty of preaching is granted; for they thereby become the common Guides of the Understanding of a whole People, and they are to be consider'd as the chief external Objects that produce Ideas in the Minds of a Number of People, who see and know nothing but by them. Of what Importance therefore is it to the Good of Society, that the Notions which they give them be just, and conformable to right Reason?

Take care of thy Health, dear *Monceca*, and live content and happy.



## L E T T E R    LXIX.

*From ISAAC ONIS, now a Caraité at Alexandria, but formerly a Rabbi at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.*

THE Winds have favour'd me to such a Degree, dear *Monceca*, that in nine Days time I am arrived at *Alexandria* from *Smyrna*. This City here-



heretofore of such Fame for the Great Men it produc'd, for the Magnificence of its Buildings, and for the Glory of its Founder, is nothing more than a confus'd Pile of unsightly Ruins, Columns, Chapiters, Bases, Remnants of Cornishes, &c. all which Remains of Antiquity lie scatter'd about, and top-sy-turvy, bury'd partly in the Sand, or employ'd to Purposes very different from those to which the antient Inhabitants had devoted them. The Ruins of antient *Alexandria* are not like those of Old *Rome*, of which there are Fragments still subsisting that retain a part of their former Beauty. It may be said of *Alexandria*, as *Virgil* said of *Troy* after its Ruin \*. The Fields and the Place where this stately City was built are still to be seen; that so celebrated Watch-tower, by the Antients reckon'd among the seven Wonders of the World, which by Order of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* was erected by *Sostratus* of *Gnidus*, subsists no longer, but is buried under Water, and scarce any Traces of it are to be seen. Near these Ruins there is a Tower built, which serves for a Light-house to Ships in the Night.

This Work was erected under *Mahometan* Princes, but does not come up by any means to the Magnificence and Splendor of the old *Pharos*, the first Story of which was a vast Apartment of white Marble. And over this superb Structure, there was a square Tower of an extraordinary Height, built of the same Marble.

Before I tell thee of the Ruins of antient *Alexandria*, the Buildings of the new City, the Pyramids of *Cairo*, and the Antiquities in this Capital of *Egypt*, I will give thee a general Character

\* *Et Campos ubi Troja fuit.* Virg. *Æn.* lib. iii.

of the Inhabitants of this Country, and in laying open their Manners and Character to the best of my Power, I shall compare them with those of the antient *Egyptians*. In doing this, I foresee that I shall have an Opportunity to gratify thy Curiosity, and that I shall be able to inform thee of many Particulars, that have escaped the Curiosity of Travellers.

In *Egypt* was our Nation form'd; in this Country did it grow and multiply; there it was that the Promises which God made to *Abraham*, began to have their Effect, and in the same Country happen'd the first Miracles, wrought by the Almighty, to deliver his People from Slavery.

The Origin of the antient *Egyptians* is altogether unknown to us; their Dynasties include the fabulous History of Sixteen or Seventeen Thousand Years; which is a Foible, or rather a Folly, that all Nations have been, or are still guilty of, more or less. The *Ethiopians* and the *Chinese* claim the Preference as to Antiquity. The *Nazarene* People, who are oblig'd to fix the Creation of the World very near where the *Hebrews* do, affect to derive their Descent as far as possible from the most antient People. They cannot go higher than the Deluge; but they endeavoured to invent Fables, deriving their Origin from the Times nearest to it. Some of the antient Poets and Historians of *France* make their Nation descend in a direct Line from *Astyanax* the Son of *Hector*. The Dynasties of the *Egyptians*, being altogether as fabulous as the pretended Origin of the *Trojans*, it were better to own frankly an Ignorance of the Manner how, and the Time when, *Egypt* was peopled, than to look for Truth in a Number of Fables that have no Appearance of it.

The

The *Persians*, *Greeks*, *Romans*, *Arabians*, and *Turks*, have in their turns subdu'd the antient Inhabitants of *Egypt*, and introduc'd themselves into the Country. The Descendants of the primitive *Egyptians* are at this Day call'd *Coptes*; these are the true Natives of the Country, but their Number compar'd to the Foreigners there, is extremely small. The Civil Wars of the *Romans* were the first Cause of the Ruin of *Egypt*. The *Greek Nazarene* Emperors put many of the Inhabitants of the Kingdom to death, and persecuted many others from an Aversion to the Heresy of *Dioscorus*, the Patriarch of *Alexandria*, whose Doctrine then was, and is still embrac'd by the *Egyptian* Nation. The *Arabian* and *Mahometan* Princes almost compleated the Ruin of the antient *Egyptians*, so that now the *Coptic* Language is no longer understood by the *Coptes* themselves; the last who knew it having been dead some Years.

The Books and Writings in that Idiom are what we shall never recover; the Knowledge of Hieroglyphics was lost heretofore in the same manner, and had it not been for the Aid of Printing, the *Greek* perhaps wou'd have had the same Fate in process of Time. The Number of *Turks* and *Jews* increases every Day in *Constantinople*, whereas that of the *Greeks* lessens visibly. For a long time past the modern *Greek* Language has had nothing in common with the antient *Greek*, or at least very little. By degrees all the People in the *Levant* will come to write in the *Turkish* Language, so that the *Greek* Characters won't perhaps be known Five hundred Years hence by any but some of the most learned *English*, *French*, *German*, and *Dutch Nazarenes*; and the antient Inhabitants of *Greece* will have no occasion for them any more than they

have for the antient Language, which they have already disused.

Besides the *Coptes*, there are two other sort of Inhabitants in *Egypt*, the first of whom are call'd the *Establish'd Bedouins*, and the latter the *Wandering Bedouins*. The former live in the Villages and Country Houses, and are to be consider'd as the Peasants of the Country. The *Wandering Bedouins* lead the same Life as the antient Patriarchs, they live under Tents upon the Milk of their Cattle, and shift their Habitations for the Convenience of Pasture; they always encamp in Places where they can easily come at Water; some sojourn near the Mountains, and others near to Places that are inhabited.

The *Turks* have a very great regard for the *Wandering Bedouins*; they abandon their Lands to them for Cultivation, that they may have no Quarrel with a People that may do them a great deal of Mischief, and whom it is not in their Power to hurt. They need never be in any fear of the *Turks*, because they can retire a Hundred Leagues into the Deserts, where it is very easy for them to subsist, by their Frugality, and Knowledge of the Wells. They are not incumber'd in their March by the Quantity of their Baggage, for the Camels carry their Tents and their Mats made of Rushes; these being all their Furniture, Beds, Palaces and Temples. These People, dear *Monceca*, are fonder of their rural Life, than the Courtiers are of the Pageanty and Bustle of a Court \*. With them  
the

\* Beatus ille, qui, procul negotiis,

Ut prisca Gens Mortalium,

Paterna Rura Bobus exercet suis,

Solutus omni Fœnore;

the Golden Age is still in being; their Cattle furnish them with their most delicate Dishes of Meat, and their Cattle provide for their other Occasions. The Wool of their Sheep suffices to clothe them, for they make a Stuff with it, which defends them from the Injuries of the Air. They look upon those to be Madmen, who build immense Palaces, and yet think they live in a narrow compass. *Don't Cares and Perplexities, say they, inhabit in those stately Buildings? If Man has no more Content nor Satisfaction in them, than we have under our Tents, why should we be at the Trouble of Building them?*

Men, dear *Monceca*, by building Towns have made themselves Slaves to one another; for they are oblig'd to grant Titles to private Men, who form Chains by which they themselves are bound. Those Bastions, Citadels, and Fortifications, are by length of Time become as hurtful to the People, as they thought them useful for a Guard against their Enemies: For they with whom these Forts were

Neque excitatur Classico miles truci,  
Neque horret iratum Mare,  
Forumque vitat, & superba Civium  
Potentiorum Limina.

*Hor. Epod. lib. Ode ii.*

*Thus Translated by Mr. CRELCH.*

- Happy the Man, beyond Pretence,
- (Such was the State of Innocence)
- That loose from Care, from Business free,
- From griping Debts and Usury,
- Contented in an humble Fate,
- With his own Oxen plows his own Estate:
- No early Trumpet breaks his Ease,
- He doth not dread the angry Seas:
- He flies the Bar, from Noise retreats,
- And shuns the Nobles haughty Seats.

trusted, have by means thereof attain'd to absolute Power; and the first Men that liv'd in Towns were the first Slaves.

The *Bedouins* have no need to assemble their General States for preserving their Liberty; for they have no Disputes; no Civil War; they find Pasture and Water wherever they go; and that is their best Treasure; their Industry, and Frugality furnishing them with every thing else. They have no Difference about Religion, no wrangling Doctors and Divines. If the most zealous *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, of whom thou hast often made mention in thy Letters, had been born *Bedouins*, they wou'd have pass'd their Lives without being disturb'd by the Rage of opposite Parties, always ready to murder one another. With these happy People, dear *Morocco*, there's no Tent encompass'd with Ditches, guarded by Soldiers, and set apart for the Confinement of Prisoners of State. The *Bedouins* never rais'd Palaces to Revenge, and made it no Crime for their Brethren to think differently from themselves; but they had every one the Liberty always of praying to the Deity in the *Turkish*, *Arabic*, *Persian*, or even the *French* Language, if they had a Fancy for it.

An Enemy, were he ever so potent, wou'd not be able with the Assistance of a Scrap of Paper obtain'd by the Favour of a *Bedouin* Minister to get an Order for a private Man to quit his Tent, his Family, and his Flock, and to repair to the Confines of *Ethiopia*, there to stay till farther Orders.

A *Bedouin* Musti does not go with a Guard of Soldiers from one Tent to another, to get a Subscription to the Confession of the *Mahometan* Faith, drawn up in a set form of Words, wherein all the Virtue of it consists.

Those

Those People are ignorant of Edicts, and new Regulations for the rising or falling the Value of Money; never does a *Bedouin* go to Bed with a Hundred Thousand Crowns in his Pocket, and rise not worth a Penny. The most that he loses is a Sheep perhaps, which a Wolf may run away with in the Night. He pays no Tax at coming into the World, nor none at going out.

Counsellors, Attorneys, Solicitors, the several Degrees of Jurisdiction, subaltern, inferiour and sovereign, are unknown to the happy *Bedouins*. A Suit of Law between two Persons never lasts above twenty-four Hours, for the oldest Man of the Tribe gives his Decision of the Matter in question upon the Spot and without Fees. These People know not how to believe that a Cause should sometimes take up a Hundred Years in the *Nazarene* Families; and all the *Turks* in general look upon such Talk as only invented to shew the Slowness of Justice; yet it is true that there are several Differences that are not accomodated in the Course of a Century. A *French* Merchant assur'd me at *Constantinople*, that he prosecuted a Suit in the Parliament at *Grenoble*, which was depending no less then a Hundred and twenty Years. .

How ridiculous is this, dear *Monceca*, or rather how avaricious? What, cannot a Controversy be decided betwixt two Men, but it must take up more Time than their Lives? Are not a Hundred and twenty Years sufficient to declare whether such an Estate belongs to *Jacob* or to *Isaac*? Happy are the *Bedouins*, who still retaining the first Impressions of Nature, have not thrown a Cloud over their Reason by such ridiculous Customs!

I have often talk'd with the *Nazarenes* concerning the Length of their Law Suits; they think they come off well enough by returning for Answer, That

tho' Justice is very slow with them, yet 'tis good, and given with very great Wisdom. But how now! Does it absolutely require Ages to judge of an Affair prudently? Must one and the same Suit be examin'd thro' three or four Generations? and must the Judges from the Father to the Son intail certain Law-Suits upon them, the Fees of which run away with a Part of the Revenue of the Family? In order to judge solidly of a Process, it is necessary to ruin the two Parties entirely, and to consume in Law-Expences more than the Sum in Dispute? 'Tis in vain, dear *Monceca*, for the *Nazarenes* to offer to plead the Equity of their Courts of Justice, as an Excuse for the Defects and Slowness of their Proceedings. Their Painters draw Justice holding a Balance; but it often turns to that Side that has most Money, at least many People complain so. There's not a private Man but trembles when he is sued by a Nobleman who has a powerful Interest. A bad Token this of the Opinion which the People have of the Integrity of their Judges; but the Case is not the same with the wandering *Bedouins*, from the Heads of whose Tribes a Man that has but a Hundred Sheep, is sure to have as much Justice as he that has Two thousand; and it seldom happens, after such Determination pass'd, that the Person condemn'd complains or makes others afraid of submitting to the same Award.

Take care of thy Health, dear *Monceca*, and may the God of our Fathers prosper thee with Abundance.





## L E T T E R LXX.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, formerly a  
Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

**T**H Y Letter, dear *Isaac*, has given me very great Pleasure. I find thy Reflections to be solid and useful, and shall think my self very happy, if thou wilt be so good as to continue to give me light into those things in *Egypt*, which are in thy Opinion worthy of the Curiosity and Attention of a Philosopher.

The Ruins of *Alexandria*, scatter'd and bury'd as they are, still convey a grand Idea of the ancient Splendour of that City. Those pieces of Marble that are seen there, those Chapiters, as much demolish'd as they are, offer still something noble to the Imagination; for those stately Ruins represent to the Mind the Grandeur and Magnificence of those Piles of Building, when they were standing and entire.

If *Paris*, and most of the Cities of *France*, shou'd happen to be destroy'd, 'twould be difficult Five hundred Years after it to discover any Traces of the most pompous Structures. For want of Marble the Structures that are already decaying, wou'd soon be bury'd in Oblivion; because Stone only resists the Shocks of Weather when 'tis join'd to other Buildings, but after it is separated from the main Building, it soon loses the Form it had receiv'd from the Hand of the Workman. There's not one Marble Pillar in all the public

Edifices at *Paris*: And *Versailles*, where *Lewis XIV* laid out such immense Sums, does not contain so much Marble, the Statues excepted, as the Palaces of some Senators at *Genoa*. The Carv'd Work of the Front of the *Tuilleries* is already nibbled and damag'd by Time, tho' the Structure is not yet finish'd.

The Ruins of the Cities in the *Archipelago* have for several Ages engag'd the Curiosity of Travelers, yet the *Turks* lessen them every Day, and carry away vast Quantities of their Marble. How much therefore must there have been of it at first? The Mosque of the Sultan *Achmet* was built only of the Stones fetch'd from the Ruins of *Troy*. The Columns which form the Peristyl of that Temple, and which are not less than an hundred and thirty in Number, were found all entire in the Fields of that antient City, For near Two hundred Years the *Turks* made use of no other Bullets for the Cannon of the *Dardanelles*, than *Corinthian* Chapiters and Columns which they broke to pieces, and then cut to make them serve that purpose. What a vast Number of Structures only built of Marble must there have been formerly in *Greece*? How many Triumphal Arches, Porticos, Perystils, Fountains and Pillars? *Rome* had not so many superb Structures as *Greece*, if we may judge by the Number of Marble Pieces, and the other Works of Architecture that have escap'd the Fury of the Times. I own that there must be prodigious Wealth in the *Tyber*, and that to be sure there are more Statues in its Channel, than there are in *Rome* now; but all these Treasures are conceal'd from our Sight, and we cannot judge of what we do not see.

About forty Years ago, our Brethren the *Jews* offer'd Twenty Millions to the sovereign Pontiff,

to get leave of him to search the *Tyber*, and to turn the Course of it for only six Months, and propos'd to examine it for only one League above, and another below that City. 'Tis very certain that in the Space of those two Leagues they would have found ten times the Value of their Premium. However, said they, as they ran a Risque of losing their Twenty Millions, they desir'd that for their greater Ease in that Work, they might be allow'd to turn off the *Tyber* in the Summer, which Clause was the very Thing that defeated their Petition. Twenty Millions was a Sum very tempting, and the Matter was debated more than once or twice; but at length it was judg'd, that the great Heats might draw such Exhalations from the drain'd Channel, as wou'd breed a Pestilence, and therefore their Request was deny'd. For my part, dear *Isaac*, I am of opinion that the Apprehension of Distempers was only a Cloak made use of to cover the real Reasons of that Refusal. The *Jews* wou'd have sold all the Treasure, the Statues, the Bronzes, the Medals, and the Columns which they wou'd have found, out of the City, because nobody in it wou'd have been rich enough to have paid down the Money for them which many sovereign Princes and rich private Men abroad wou'd have given. 'Twas the same political Reason that hindered the Removal of the Pictures and Statues from *Rome*: And had it not been for this wise Regulation, that City wou'd have been stripp'd long ago of abundance of fine Things which the Nobility and Citizens wou'd have sold; and by degrees Foreigners becoming possess'd at Home of what drew them to *Rome*, would have resorted to that City no longer, which wou'd have been a notorious Prejudice to it. This Regulation has been so rigidly adher'd to, that the Great Dukes

of *Tuscany* never cou'd obtain Leave for the Removal of old *Hercules* out of their Palace at *Rome* to their own Dominions.

*Lewis XIV.*, in the time of his greatest Splendour, made a Purchase at *Rome* of a Part of the Antiques that are in the Gallery of *Versailles*; and the Person commission'd to send them to *France*, was *Poussin* the famous Painter, who was a Subject of his Majesty. The sovereign Pontiff not being able to help it, gave his Consent; but in order to keep Peace with the Populace, and to prevent a Tumult, they were oblig'd to embark them in the Night-time, when no body knew any thing of the Matter. 'Tis true, that if *Lewis XIV.* had pleas'd, he cou'd have oblig'd the Magistrates of *Rome* to send them to him themselves, for he was then so much dreaded at *Rome*, that no body durst refuse it him; but he was for avoiding all Discussions, which, when those they have to deal with don't act with Vigour, the *Romans* spin out to Eternity, so that it requires more Time to settle the least Incident with them, than to conclude a general Peace throughout *Europe*. Impertinence and Chicanery seem to be the Province of the *Nazarene* Priests, but of no People more than the *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, who when they cannot dispute with their Enemies, and gainsay them, pick a Quarrel with their own Brethren and Adherents: Of which the following is a recent Instance.

The Pontiff of *Paris*, of whom I have not yet made any mention in my Letters, is very much hated by the *Jansenists*, who have aim'd to blacken his Reputation by defamatory Libels; but the better sort of People have not suffer'd themselves to be prejudiced by these Invectives. The Pontiff is very much of a Gentleman. Before he came to

*Paris*:

*Paris* he had govern'd another Church, where he was universally belov'd even by the *Jansenists*. He was rais'd to the chief Ecclesiastical Dignity in the Kingdom, and fell a Sacrifice to it ; for being oblig'd to stand his ground against all the Efforts of the *Jansenist* Party, he soon regretted the Loss of that Tranquillity which he had enjoy'd in his old Diocese. However he endeavour'd to sweeten their Tempers as much as he could. Being an Enemy to violent and rigorous Measures, he was desirous that an Accommodation might be enter'd into sincerely : But the Good Man did not very well know the People he had to do with : The *Jansenists* were so enrag'd against him, that they even reproach'd him for eating too much ; as if his Appetite had been a Crime, and as if a puny Stomach was essential to Righteousness. Finding at length that all he could do wou'd be to no Purpose, he let things take their Course. Complaint had been made a long time in his Diocese, that a Book which the *Nazarenes* call a *Breviary*, wanted much to be regulated. 'Tis a Collection of the Psalms of the Royal Prophet, with a Mixture of some Prayers of their own composing. The Pontiff order'd the Men skill'd in the *Nazarene* Law to compose a new *Breviary*. While this was doing, all the *Jansenists* murmur'd and rav'd sadly against the Book, and those that composed it. The *Molinists*, on the contrary, gave out every where, that the Work, which would soon appear, was excellent. It did appear, and by a merry Accident the *Jansenists* receiv'd it with very great Respect, and the *Molinists* declaim'd against it with very great Rage ; so that they fill'd *Paris* with their seditious Writings. Two Priests there are \* among others,

\* *Languet*, the *Curé*, or Parson of *St. Sulpice* ; and the Parson of *St. Nicholas de Chardonneret*.

who have solemnly protested that they will not abandon their old *Breviary*; one of them especially raves and tears at a deadly rate \*; he is a religious Coxcomb, who is like enough one day or other to introduce the Convulsions of the *Jansenists* among the *Molinists*. He says that the new *Breviary* is a Book full of dangerous Errors; that it deserves to be burnt; that his Pontiff had in all Appearance gorg'd too much when he approv'd it; and that he appeals from the *Afternoon* Pontiff to the *Morning* Pontiff. The Parliament, which does not think his Arguments very excellent, maintains that the *Breviary* is right and good, and that as such it ought to be receiv'd. That sovereign Court has since condemn'd a certain Writing; which was shrewdly suspected to be the Composition of some fanatical Priest, to be torn and burnt by the common Hangman. Mean time the Affair of the *Breviary* is not yet ended; the angry *Molinists* say 'tis good for nothing, and that 'tis impossible for an Arret of Parliament to make bad Merchandize good. They compare this Book to rusty Bacon, which is enough to spoil the best Sauce; consequently, say they, the Book is enough to poison the soundest Mind. From whence the *Nazarenes* fetch'd this Comparison, I know not; for 'tis perfectly in the *Hebrew* Taste, and what wou'd have been very significant in the Mouth of a *Jew*, considering the Aversion we naturally have to the Hog, an unclean Animal, the Flesh of which is forbid us by our Holy Law.

There is nothing now stirring at *Paris* but the Dispute about this *Breviary*. I will take care to inform thee in what manner it ends; 'tis probable that the Priests will be oblig'd to submit, for the secular Judges have a way to punish them, which cuts them

\* The Parson of St. *Sulpice*.

to the very Heart, namely, by stripping them of their Revenues; the Clergy being so selfish, that this is the only way to bring them to the Point where you wou'd have them.

As to the Person who has declar'd in the most public manner against the Introduction of this new Book, they say of him in particular, that he makes his Money his God. He is building a magnificent Temple, but they say, 'tis worth more to him than to the Workmen whom he employs. Under the specious Pretence of a Collection towards the Charges of the Building, and Decoration of it, he receives Money from all Hands. 'Tis all the same thing to him who has no manner of Exception to the Money, which is still Money, come from whomsoever it will. I am positive he wou'd not think it a Trouble to receive a Profit from the common Whores at *Paris*, if he was to be permitted to lay a Tax upon their Trade. He wou'd build his Temple, as that famous *Egyptian* Courtezan built one of the Pyramids of *Egypt*, out of the Profits she got by the Sparks to whom she granted her Favours.

Perhaps, dear *Isaac*, thou wilt be astonish'd at the Obstinacy of this Clergyman, in endeavouring to distinguish himself thus singly from all his Brethren. He hopes by his Rebellion to make his Court to the sovereign Pontiff. 'Tis by these bold Strokes, that a private Man makes himself known, and renders his Name considerable among the Madmen of the Party that he has embrac'd: And the Court of *Rome*, for which no body ever does any Service in vain, is sure, sooner or later, to reward such blind Zeal. Thus the most criminal Undertakings are often the best recompenc'd. In all Places, and especially amongst the Clergy, there are *Erostratus's* of this modern Sort, who, to get a  
Name,

Name, set every thing in a Flame, and raise sudden Hurricanes in times of the greatest Calm.

Some Years ago, a Pontiff that was an outrageous *Molinist* \*, publish'd a Paper in violation of the Regard that he owed to the King his Master, and to the Welfare of his Country ; which Proceeding of his was suppos'd to have been owing to the Instigation of the *Jesuits*, tho' they had no Share in it. The Pontiff having heard it, declar'd publicly, that the *Jesuits* were so far from having a hand in the Performance which he had publish'd, that they did what they cou'd to hinder it, and of this I make no Doubt. The *Jesuits*, tho' they are the most rigid *Molinists*, yet they are the most politic : The silly things done by those who are attach'd to them, are a very great Discredit to them ; and if they cou'd always restrain their Tempers, the subaltern *Molinists* wou'd not commit many Follies that they are guilty of. But let the General Officers of an Army have ever so much Foresight, 'tis impossible for them to hinder the Folly of a Soldier, a Sutler, or the Foot-Soldier's Post-Boy.

Farewell, dear *Isaac* ; and may the God of our Fathers grant thee Riches in abundance.

\* The Archbishop of *Arles*.







# L E T T E R LXXI.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, lately a Rabbi,  
at Constantinople.*

THE News from *Corfica*, dear *Isaac*, differs very much, and People begin to doubt whether the Project of the pretended King *Theodore* will succeed ; Money fails him, and the Succours that he had promis'd are not arriv'd. A third Party is form'd in the Island, and the *Genoeses* hope to see their Affairs soon retriev'd, or at least they give out so. I must tell thee plainly, dear *Monceca*, that after having reason'd a long time upon the Transactions in *Corfica*, I frankly own, that I know not what to make of it. I talk with Politicians here every Day, who are mighty Speculators, and lay open the whole Mystery of this Adventure, with as much Assurance as if they were let into the most secret Particulars of it. They pretend to know the famous Magician that protects this Knight-Errant ; they know from whence came the Assistance he has had hitherto ; and they tell you the Particulars of what he is to expect. But after having heard them for a good while, when one comes to reflect upon what they have said, 'tis plain that 'tis all meer Guess-work, and that it cannot stand the Test of Examination.

If one considers *Theodore* in the Light of a Fortune-hunter, if we believe what the *Genoeses* say of him, his Arrival in *Corfica* has something as extraordinary in it as the prodigious Rise of *Tamerlane*,  
who,

who, as some *Arabian* Authors say, was only the Son of a Shepherd; and 'tis really not near so surprising for a private Centinel of the *Tartars*, to become Master and Head of his Country, as it is to see a private Man, one of the vulgar Rank, get himself to be declar'd King in the Centre of *Europe*, and in sight too of a great many Princes, jealous of the Grandeur and Majesty of their Rank, which would be depreciated, if a notorious Fortune-hunter shou'd become their Equal. For, in short, if by chance the *Genoese* should be entirely drove out of the Island of *Corfica*, and *Theodore* shou'd be recogniz'd by all the Inhabitants for their sovereign Lord and Master, I wou'd know what the sovereign Powers of *Europe* would do in that Case? Cou'd such Monarchs as the Emperor and the King of *France*, find in their Hearts ever to recognize for a lawful Sovereign, a King crown'd by a Rebellion form'd by Wickedness, and who before he became a Sovereign did, as they say, more than once dishonour the Character of a Gentleman? I don't believe there's any body silly enough to imagine, that those Princes wou'd behave in that Manner. But, on the other hand, *Theodore* wou'd have Dominions, Subjects, Ships, Harbours, Towns, &c. and when any Quarrel happens with him, as 'tis impossible but there must, upon what Foot shou'd he be treated with? *France* wou'd even be forc'd to it by the Situation of *Corfica*; for there are few Ships that set out from *Marseilles* for the *Levant*, but what anchor either going or coming upon the Coasts of *Corfica*.

Several Persons resolve these Difficulties, by saying, that as soon as *Theodore* is Master and peaceable Possessor of his Country, another Power wou'd expel him out of it. But I ask, whether such Reasoning is consistent with good Policy? I think

'tis altogether the Reverse of it; and that unless all those Difficulties between the *European* Powers are prevented, before they go about to expel *Theodore*, the Power that shou'd undertake it wou'd find several Princes ready to oppose him. But, as some People say, every thing is already settled and concluded, and they all know what they have to trust to: This is what I shall inquire into hereafter, but in the mean time I think this Opinion liable to a world of Objections. I really consider (supposing that *Theodore* acts only upon his own Bottom) what Obstacles that Power wou'd meet with, who shou'd offer to drive him out of *Corfica*, if he was once in peaceable Possession of it. Suppose *Spain* should be that Power, 'twould be the Interest of *France* strenuously to oppose that Nation's having a Country with Towns and Harbours which entirely block up those of *Marseilles*, *Toulon*, and *Antibes*: For in case the *Spaniards* were to have a War with *France*, they would, with two Frigates of twenty Guns each, absolutely interrupt the Trade to the *Levant*. In a Storm, the Merchant-Ships wou'd be oblig'd to go for Shelter to very distant Ports, and sometimes would be able to find none, especially if the Wind should hinder them from making the Coast of *Italy*. The Island of *Corfica*, in the Hands of so formidable a Power as the *Spaniards*, wou'd become as pernicious to the Trade of *Marseilles*, as the *French* in the Time of War wou'd be troublesome to the *Catalans*, if they should ever be Masters of the Island of *Majorca*. Do but cast thy Eye, dear *Isaac*, upon a Map, and thou wilt be convinc'd thyself of the Truth of my Opinion.

*France* wou'd not be the only Power oblig'd in Interest to hinder the *Spaniards* from having the Island of *Corfica*. Undoubtedly the King of *Sardinia*

*dinia* wou'd be very loth to consent to it; *Nice*, *Villa-Franca*, and his other Maritime Towns being already so much pent up and cramp'd by *France*, that I don't believe he wou'd care to have another Neighbour so incommodious. Some Politicians are of Opinion, that the *European* Powers wou'd freely consent that the King of *Sardinia* shou'd be Master of the Island of *Corfica*. But *France* has the same Reason to oppose the *Piedmontese* as to oppose the *Spaniards*; because, tho' the former are not near so powerful as the latter, they might become very troublesome to *France* whenever they shou'd unite with other Powers against her. What wou'd become of *Toulon* and all *Provence*, if the *English* and *Dutch* had it in their Power to form Magazines, and to have a Number of Towns and Sea-ports but forty Leagues from *Provence*, and to be able to come in twenty-four Hours time to anchor there with a Squadron whenever they pleased.

If it be almost as much the Interest of *France* as of *Spain*, to see the *English* dispossest of *Port Mahon*, how much more is she oblig'd in Interest, not to let a formidable Power establish itself in those Ports that block up all her Harbours in the *Mediterranean*? Some People think that she wou'd not be very uneasy, if those Ports were in the Hands of the King of *Naples* and *Sicily*; but this Argument is so weak that it confutes itself. The Union of the Courts of *Madrid* and *Naples* is so strict, their Interests are so united, that the same Reasons which oppose the *Spaniards* oppose the *Neapolitans*. Besides, all Men are mortal, Sovereigns themselves being not exempted by the Deity from the Laws of Death. If the Prince of *Asturias*, who has no Children, shou'd happen to die, are not those Ports in the Hands of *Spain*, and by consequence of a formidable

able Power? But some will say, who knows whether by the secret Articles of the very Treaties that wou'd render the *Neapolitans* Masters of the Country, they wou'd not be oblig'd to abandon it to another Prince, the very Moment that their Sovereign shou'd become King of *Spain*? To this I answer, That an able Politician will never rely upon the Faith of Restitutions. The Councils of Princes are as fruitful in Excuses as the Society of *Jesuits* is; they never want plausible Pretences, and they make use of the Privilege of the Direction of the Intention. The *English* are lately become very *Jesuits* upon this Head; and I believe they have been oblig'd to those Reverend Fathers for several Arguments, with regard to the Article of *Gibraltar* and *Port Mahon*. And what might not the *Spaniards* do, who are prone by Nature to follow the Direction of the *Jesuits*?

These, dear *Isaac*, are the Reasons which incline me to suspect that *Theodore* does not act upon his own Bottom, but is directed by a *Primum Mobile*. His want of Money, and of a sufficient Number of Forces; the Slowness with which he goes on, and his not having yet perform'd a single Action that can be decisive; all this together confirms me in my Opinion.

But, on the other hand, when I come to consider that the Baron *de Newhoff* was a Slave two Years ago, that he was sick in a Hospital three Years ago, that he has spent his Patrimony long since; and when I see him arriv'd in *Corfica* with Chests full of Gold Coin, and with eight Brass Cannon, the least of which cost above two thousand Crowns, I know not what to think of it. Two or three hundred thousand Livres is not a Sum to be borrow'd upon slender Hopes, which even appear ridiculous to  
any

any that will but examine them. How then cou'd the Baron *de Newhoff* compass those Supplies with which he has supplied the *Corficans*? If he had them not from private Hands, he must needs have had them from some sovereign Power; and if it is some Sovereign that assists, supports, and protects him, why does he abandon him to Necessity? Why does he suffer him to want Money, and expose him to the Hazard of employing the first Sums he gave him to no purpose?

One is perfectly lost and bewilder'd in the Attempt to dive to the Bottom of these Reflections. There are Politicians who think it easy to unfold all these Secrets. As for my part, I own sincerely, that I can comprehend but little, if any thing, of the Matter: Perhaps they who fancy they know the Mystery, are as ignorant of it as I am; but they are not so candid, and wou'd fain pass their Conjectures upon the World for real Facts. This is too much the Foible of all Politicians; nothing puts them to a stand, and they readily find Reasons to solve the greatest Difficulties. They penetrate into the very Cabinets of Princes; they know the most secret thing that passes there, and they foretel the End of a War before 'tis scarce begun. In fine, they regulate all the Courts of *Europe*; but unhappily for themselves and their Predictions, they are as much mistaken as the Makers of Almanacs.

It must be Time, dear *Isaac*, that will clear up that confused Chaos of Ideas, which Mankind forms upon the Baron *de Newhoff*'s Undertaking. Mean while let us suspend our Judgment. There are ten or twelve People in *Europe* that know the Secret of this Affair; and to be sure 'tis an infinite Pleasure to them, to hear what other Folks say. We shall one Day have the same Advantage

as they have now; and when the Intricacy is clear'd up, the vain Conjectures which we form at present will be an Amusement to us in our Turn.

As soon as I learn any thing new, I will let thee know it by a Letter, and shall take care to inform myself exactly of what may serve for our Instruction. After all, they give out here that the said Lord *Theodore* treats his new Subjects with very great Rigour, those especially whom he suspects to be against him. A bare Suspicion is with him such a Crime, that nothing but Death can atone for it. He has caus'd four of the chief Men that were against him to be shot to death, but I think he wou'd have done much better to pardon them; for such an Instance of his Generosity wou'd have won him many more Hearts, than a slavish Fear will ever retain in Respect and Submission.

I can't but think that the Blood which is spilt upon Scaffolds in Civil Wars, produces the same Effect as that of the Primitive *Nazarenes*, which the Pagan Emperors shed with so much Rage. The more of them that were put to death, the more the Number of 'em increas'd. The very same thing happens in Civil Wars; the Spirit of Party is heated by Murder and Slaughter, and the Death of one Person determines a hundred to espouse his Party. The Murderer is sure to be hated, and he that dies will infallibly be pity'd. The Death of the famous Admiral *de Coligni*, and of the other Protestants, only serv'd to increase the Number of *Henry IV's* Adherents. The Losses which the Catholic Cantons sustain'd in their last War, united them more than ever together. Since the entire Suppression of the Religion of the *Nazarene* Papists in *Ireland*, the Number of the *Nazarenes* of that Faith is rather increas'd there

than diminish'd. The Deposing of the Pontiff of the City of *Senès*, in the Council of *Ambrun* has very much augmented the Number of *Jansenists* in *France*. People are much sooner reclaim'd by Lenity, than by violent and bloody Methods. *Philip II's* Character for Cruelty, gave the first Blow to the *Spanish* Monarchy, and made him lose those Countries that now form the Republic of *Holland*.

Take care of thy Health, dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers give thee an abundant Measure of Prosperity.



## L E T T E R LXXII.

From JACOB BRITO, at *Lausanne* in Switzerland, to AARON MONCECA, at *Paris*.

**B**EFORE I cou'd pursue my Route thro' *Lyons* and *Languedoc*, in order to make the best of my way to *Lisbon*, I was oblig'd to go and pass a few Days at *Lausanne*. I have receiv'd Passports for six Months from the Courts of *Spain* and *Portugal*, so that I can now do all my Business quietly, without being terrify'd by the Priests or the Inquisition. *Samuel Pinaro* has procur'd a Commission for me to be Agent extraordinary to the Republic of *Genoa*, while I stay at *Lisbon*, which Title gives me a Character that puts me out of all manner of Danger; I doubt not but to discover a great many things in the Voyage I purpose to make which may be the Foundation of some Philosophical Reflections, and  
I will



I will write to thee from *Spain*, as constantly as I have done from *Italy*.

I have few things to acquaint thee of at present. *Lausanne* is a very pretty Town, being the Capital of the *Pays de Vaux* in the Canton of *Bern*. The People here live much more after the *French* Fashion than they do in the other Towns, yet in general they partake of the Manners and Customs of their Brethren, and the Produce of the Country is just the same as that of the other Cantons. The Wine here is very good, and their Lake and Rivers abound with all manner of Fish; nor is there any want of Fowl and all other Necessaries of Life. In this Climate, Nature furnishes the Inhabitants with every thing that is for their use, and is only sparing in the things that introduce Luxury, and encourage Debauchery.

The *Switzers* are inur'd to all the Hardships of Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Heat; they live very cheap, Milk and Cheese being their principal Food\*. Cooks are of no use with them, or have very little Employment; they being ignorant of the Art of mixing Poisons that are pernicious to Health and long Life, under the Name of Nice Ragoûts, and savoury Dishes. Their Houses are but indifferent, and their Furniture is as plain as that of the primitive Times: Their Apparel which is made for their use, and not to dazzle the Eyes of the Spectators, is proportion'd to the rest; but so many Virtues are obscur'd by one considerable Fault; for they are most abominable Drunkards. They sometimes spend Days and Nights in continual Debauchery, and there's no Hopes of getting a Place in their Hearts, but by a Glass in the

\* This must chiefly be understood of their Mountaineers and Peasants.

Hand; Wine being with them the Cement of Friendship. In *Switzerland* the greatest Drinker is reckon'd the best Man, and he that can carry off his six or seven Bottles of Wine, is as much courted at their Entertainments, as a Poet or a facetious Author is in *France*, at their Parties of Pleasure. If *Chapelle* \* and *St. Evremond* had liv'd in *Switzerland*, they wou'd have pass'd for a couple of pitiful Fellows, not worthy to be admitted into good Company.

Whatsoever Pleasure the *Switzers* take in drinking, yet as soon as their Debaucheries are over, they go to their Business and double their Industry and Diligence to retrieve their Expences. *They work to drink*, says a modern Author, *and they drink the better to work*. Their Inclination to Wine does not hinder them from being prudent and circumspect in Affairs public and private; so that to be sure the Fumes of the Wine don't get up into their Brains so much as they do into those of other People; for there's no Treaty, Agreement, Lease, or Contract made without the Bottle in Hand, to wet the Bargain with the bewitching Liquor. Nor are their Politics the worse for their tippling, for after having drank all Day long, a *Swiss* knows perfectly well what is for the Benefit and Happiness of his Country. This is a sort of Miracle, but 'tis so plain a Case that its Reality cannot be doubted, the Cantons having maintain'd their Liberty for so many Ages against several Princes, that would fain have subdued them. 'Tis to their Union that they owe their Preservation, and the Esteem they have acquir'd all over *Europe*, in which there

\* Yet the Author of the Life of *Moliere* represents him at least as an agreeable Debauchee, if not a very Drunkard.

are

are no Princes but what are very glad to be their Allies.

The *Switzers* are got into a Method of having a great Number of well-disciplin'd and experienc'd Soldiers, that cost them nothing; they send their Youth to serve in foreign Countries; a great many sovereign Princes have *Swiss* Regiments in their pay, which are constantly recruited by Men that the Cantons give leave for raising in their own Country. But as fast as the young Fellows list and go out of their Country for a certain Time, they who preceded them obtain their Dismission, and return to their own Country, perfectly bred up and train'd in the Art of War. Besides the Soldiers that are form'd out of *Switzerland*, they take great Care to make all the Citizens and Tradesmen perform military Exercise on particular Days of the Year; and the very Peasants themselves are not exempt from this Service, who after having work'd certain Days of the Week for themselves, employ the rest for the Public Good and Safety of the Country.

Tho' these Precautions are very well judg'd, yet the Cantons have little to fear from the Invasions of Foreigners; the inaccessible Mountains of the *Alps* serve them for Ramparts, and there's not a Prince in *Europe*, that, be it either from Fear or from Interest, durst attack them: For were he after an expensive War to subdue them, what he wou'd get by it in fifty Years Time, wou'd not countervail the Expence of one single Campaign. If the *Switzers* are ever in danger of being destroy'd, it can be only by themselves; for as long as they continue united, they will subsist as they have done hitherto; but if ever they are divided among themselves, if Hatred, Discord and Envy get room in their Hearts, they will themselves do

that in a little Time, which was out of the Power of all *Eurepe*.

Some Years ago the Popish and Protestant Cantons had a cruel War; the Division was occasion'd by a Monk call'd the Abbot of *St. Gall*; for in all the Dominions of the *Nazarenes*, it seems that always Disputes and Dissension are owing to the turbulent Spirit of the Monks and Priests. This Abbot put himself at the Head of the Popish Cantons, and like another *Joshua*, he said he was resolv'd to extirpate all the Enemies of God's People; which was the Name that he gave to the *Swiss* Protestants. For this End he had given to every Soldier Billets, containing Lists of the Men that each of them was to murder. One was oblig'd to cut the Throats of five, another of six, another of seven, and every one more or less, in short, according as the Abbot judg'd that the Soldier whom he commission'd for that purpose, had more or less Strength and Courage. He drew up his Army, and before the Battle began, he promis'd a Place in Heaven to those who died in the Field, and a great many other Indulgences on the Part of the sovereign Pontiff to those that shou'd perform the Orders of the Ticket. After this he retir'd prudently to sleep in a whole Skin, and left it to his Officers to take care of the rest. But things did not answer his Expectation by a great deal; for his Army was intirely defeated, the murdering Tickets had no Effects, and this modern *Joshua* was so far from praying to the Deity to stop the Course of the Sun, to give him time for the compleat Overthrow of his Enemies, that he pray'd to it earnestly to bring on Night and Darknes, in order to save him and the rest of his Party from the Fury and Revenge of the *Nazarene* Protestants.

After

After the Battle the *Swiss* Papists were sensible of the Folly they had been guilty of; they were convinc'd how ruinous it wou'd be for them to carry on a War which had prov'd so fatal to them in the Beginning, and therefore propos'd a Peace to their Enemies; who, fond to shake Hands again with their Brethren, whom Discord had torn from them, readily consented to an Accommodation that pacify'd all *Switzerland*, and settl'd its Liberty on such a Basis that it cannot be robb'd of it while it continues united. This is a Truth of which all the Cantons, both Popish and Protestant, are fully convinc'd, and consequently they endeavour always to live in Peace and Unity. The Abbot of *St. Gall* now and then makes fresh Attempts to embroil Affairs again, and to foment new Disputes; but the *Swiss* Papists know better things, having paid so dear for their Experience, and the Protestants had rather submit and bear with some things patiently, than plunge their Country again in a Civil War.

Some time after the Reformation was introduc'd, the Difference of Opinions making a very great Noise, and the Magistrates fearing that such jarring Sentiments might produce some popular Tumult and Sedition, they resolv'd unanimously that in those Cantons where there were more Papists than Protestants, every one shou'd hereafter adhere to the Interest of the sovereign Pontiff, and that in those where the Number of his Adherents was less than that of his Adversaries, they shou'd intirely break off Communion with him. This was done with as much Ease as it was propos'd; all was quiet, and every one liv'd at his own House in Peace. The acting with so much Prudence and good Sense does not denote an Inclination to Quarrel and Contention. The *Switzers* are the only

People capable of entering into Measures where there's such a Mixture of Frankness and Candor; nor do they boast of being great Philosophers. I don't believe that there were ever many Authors in their Country of any great Reputation; for with them a Poet is as great a Wonder, as an Elephant is at *Paris*; and in general they have more Vessels of Wine in their Vaults, than Volumes in their Libraries. It may be said of the *Switzers*, that they have a great Share of good Sense, but that their Neighbours have all the Wit \*.  
I

\* The Marquis *d'Argens* having been reflected on, in a Paragraph foisted into the *Bibliothèque Germanique*, Tom. XL. (unknown to the learned Author M. *de Beausobre*) as if he had asserted, that there are no truly learned Men in *Switzerland*, thought it necessary in this Place to make *Aaron Monceca's* Apology, as follows, *viz.*

He was very well persuaded of the contrary; but he spoke of the *Switzers* in the general. His Expressions taken in their strict Sense, can only be understood to mean, that the Men of Learning are more scarce in *Switzerland* than in *France* and *England*. Really such as thought that *Aaron Monceca* meant to disparage the *Switzers* and to extol the *French*, have quite mistaken his Sense; for he grants solid Treasure to the former, and nothing but Tinsel to the latter. Are there any Talents, any Qualities which a true Philosopher values like Wisdom and fair Argument? Can Wit, ever so sparkling, be put in comparison with good Sense? I have read over this Letter three Times successively with a firm Resolution to strike out every thing that I cou'd think might give occasion for the Murmurs of certain People; and I cou'd find nothing in it, but what I have heard declar'd a hundred times by two hundred *Swiss* Officers, or Merchants, who had a great Share both of Wit and Good Sense, and who judging of  
things

I have read a Book which is reckon'd a Master-piece in this Country; 'tis intitled, *Letters concerning the French and the English; by a Swiss.* This Work has had a good Vent in foreign Parts, but to be plain with thee, 'tis not worth much; for the Author affects to be witty, and to say pretty things, which is his Foible, while he embroils himself with a Number of Divisions and Subdivisions. *Le Beau*, says he, *n'est pas toujours Bon; mais, le Bon doit être Beau. Les François n'ont que le Beau: Leur Beau ne vaut donc pas le Bon.* i. e. That which is fair to the Eye, is not always good, but that which is good, must be fair. The *French* have only the Fair, but their Fair is not equivalent to the Good. Now the whole Tendency of this Balderdash, this ringing of the Changes upon the Words *Bon* and *Beau*, and *Beau* which is not *Bon*, is to prove that *Boileau*, and some other Authors of the first Class, are mean Geniusses, and hardly worth reading. He thinks the *English* Comedies scarce worthy the Esteem of good Judges; tho' as to the *Belles Lettres*, the *English* have succeeded best, and have produced several excellent Pieces. In fine, dear *Manceca*, notwithstanding so many People have approv'd of this Book, I think it a bad one, writ in a bombastic obscure Stile, conveying no lively Idea to the Imagination, false in its Criticisms, and incorrect in its Opinions.

‘ things without Prejudice, cou'd not believe that the  
 ‘ blaming of the Faults of a Nation in general, was  
 ‘ determining the Merit of every private Man in par-  
 ‘ ticular. I repeat it again; Let this Letter be read  
 ‘ with a Philosophical Eye, and then it will appear  
 ‘ whether I intended to vilify one of the most consider-  
 ‘ able Nations in *Europe*.

I wou'd not venture to say so much in this Country as I now write to thee, for the *Switzers* are very much prepossess'd in favour of this Work, and almost as fond of it as they are of the Liberty of the Citizens, which is their continual Topic. But I must tell thee, that this Liberty about which they make so much Noise, extends only to People of some Rank, for the Vulgar are in more Subjection here than in any other State. Every Bailiff in this Country is a petty Sovereign, who, as long as his Employment holds, thinks of nothing but how to make the most of it: So that the People often groan under the Government of some of the Bailiffs, whom they love just as much as they deserve, and no more.

All Countries, dear *Monceca*, have their Good and their Bad; and if we take a Survey of the several Forms of Government, it will appear, that, bating a few things, they are much like one another: I mean the *European* Nations only, out of which I except those, where the Inquisition exercises its Fury.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and live content and happy.







## L E T T E R LXXIII.

From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraité, late a Rabbi,  
at Constantinople.

THEY tell a piece of News here, as diverting as it is extraordinary; 'They affirm that the new King of *Corfica* has wrote to the Wife of the Steward of the Archduchess *Mary Magdalen*, to acquaint her that he had been elected King of *Corfica*, and to desire her to procure the necessary Passports for a Minister whom he intended to send to the Court of *Vienna*.' Whether this News be true, I know not; but I don't believe that it is possible for Impertinence and Stupidity to be carry'd to a greater Height than they are by this notable King *Theodore*. Where is that Mortal who can be a greater Fool than he who fancies that a Prince, such as the Emperor, wou'd vouchsafe to receive an Envoy or an Ambassador from Rebels that rather deserve his Indignation than Protection, because they abus'd his Goodness; and in a few Months after he had procur'd their Pardon from the *Genoese*, rebell'd again; and only made use of the Emperor's Kindness, to favour the new Crimes which they were contriving.

But after all, admitting, dear *Isaac*, that the *Corficans* had just Reasons for their Rebellion, and that the Tyranny of the *Genoese* had forc'd them to take up Arms, can one so much as harbour a Thought that the Court of *Vienna* wou'd receive

the pretended Envoys of a Fortune-hunter, and a parcel of wretched Mountaineers, to the Prejudice of a Republic which it had always protected. It would be a Slur on the Majesty of the Imperial Throne, if it afforded shelter to People of that Rank. Rebels are always odious to Princes, unless they get by their Crimes; and it may be well said, that tho' they love the Treason when they find their Account in it, yet they hate the Traitor. They are afraid lest such Monsters should rise in their Dominions, as they find in those of their Enemies; and if they sometimes reward the Crime with one Hand, they seek a Pretence to punish the Criminal with the other. The *Spaniards* had a vast Contempt for the *French*, who betraying their Country, abandon'd their lawful Sovereign: They made use of them as Tools to their Designs, but they were cautious of trusting them with Places of Importance; they were more cunning Politicians, than to be ignorant that they who cou'd disobey their lawful Sovereign, might with much more Reason betray those to whom they are only attach'd by Crimes.

If, dear *Isaac*, we observe the Men who are tax'd with just Reason for the Violation of their Faith and their Oaths, we shall find that they never stopp'd at the first Perjury, but went on from one step to another, till Treason became their common Practice. They have actually reduc'd this Crime into an Art and a Science, and have cover'd their Knavery with the Name of *State Policy*. Fatal Stupidity! which, under the Veil of an affected Precaution, conceals Fraud, Perjury and Diffimulation!

Let the perfidious Talent of craftily abusing Mens Honesty be ever so noxious to Society, yet we see that many People, who were weak or  
blinded

blinded by Prejudices, have bestow'd great Praise upon Men that deserv'd nothing but to be bore down with Contempt for their Perjuries. They who have commended *Sylla, Cæsar, Mark Anthony*, and several other Imitators of their Rapacity, approve the Conduct of great Rogues, and censure that of little ones; as if it was a greater Crime for a Man to steal an Ox, or a Load of Bread-Corn, than to betray his Country.

Let People say what they will in praise of the Valour, Courage, Resolution, Prudence, &c. of those to whose Rebellion their Country's Ruin has been owing, I no more admire those Virtues in them, than I do the Resolution of a Highway-Man and a Murderer, or his Foresight in the Snares which he lays for Travellers.

'Tis not in the Subjects only that I require Honesty, but I expect to see it likewise in Princes. 'Tis in vain to object that their Condition requires Dissimulation: There's a great Difference between Dishonesty and the wise and prudent Manner of governing. What Monarch did ever govern his Dominions better than *Lewis XII*, the Father of his People? Where was there a Man of more Candour and Honesty? The Frankness and Sincerity of *Henry IV* defeated all the vain Schemes of the *Spanish* Politicians.

They who fancy that a Prince is no farther great than he is crafty, are guilty of a wretched Mistake. There is a great Difference between Wisdom and Knavery; and tho' in this corrupt Age they are call'd by the same Name, yet the wise Man easily distinguishes them. A King, 'tis true, is not oblig'd to discover his Designs to his Enemies, nay he ought to take care to conceal them from them; but then he ought not by vain Promises, by the Lure of a feign'd Reconciliation,

ciliation, and under the Veil of a disguis'd Friendship, to tempt them into the Snares he lays for their Destruction. A great Soul, in whatever Station, always takes Virtue for its Guide. A Crime is still a Crime, and nothing can diminish from its Enormity: He who lyes, offends Heaven, and offends himself. A Lye has something in it so odious that it is a Shock to the Character of a Gentleman, whatsoever can be said to mitigate it. The very Nations which the *Greeks* treated as Barbarians\*, had nevertheless an Abhorrence of Lyes and Fraud. *Herodotus* † does them this Justice. The *Persians*, says he, have an infinite Contempt for those who falsify their Word; and they train their Children from five to twenty-five Years old in nothing but to draw the Bow, to ride on Horseback, and to speak the Truth.

How many Misfortunes, dear *Isaac*, wou'd never have happen'd in the World, if Men were Slaves to their Oaths, and kept their Promises inviolably! How wou'd Peace and Tranquility flourish in it! Kings wou'd always be sure of Loyal Subjects, and such as are true to the Allegiance they have sworn to them. On the other hand, those Sovereigns who are careful to perform the Conditions they promis'd to observe at their Accession to their Thrones, wou'd become the Fathers of a People easy to obey, and at the same time to be submissive only to Justice and Equity.

May all those perish, dear *Isaac*, who are for excusing Monarchs from that which is the fittest Qualification to establish them on their Thrones. By the inculcating of that pernicious Maxim to

\* The *Persians*, &c.

† History of *Herodotus*, lib. i. pag. 69. translated by  
du Ryer.

them, that they might dispense with the Performance of their Engagements, they have made them prove dangerous Examples to their Subjects; and 'tis this detestable Principle that has been the Source of all the intestine Wars. that have so long distracted most of the Kingdoms of *Europe*. For the exorbitant Power with which Flatterers have aim'd to compliment Kings, has often occasion'd the Ruin of themselves and their Dominions. Happy is that Prince, dear *Isaac*, who in the midst of the Pomp and Splendour of his Court, preserves a Heart incapable of Fraud and Treachery, and who is so in love with Honesty, that he protects it, and preaches it to his Subjects by his own Example. He is the Darling of the People his Contemporaries, and the Admiration of Posterity. They who are trusted with the Education of Princes, cannot sufficiently inspire them with Candour and Sincerity, since from hence all Virtues are deriv'd. A famous *Nazarene* Pontiff\*, who form'd the Infancy of a great Prince †, wrote a Book for the Instruction of Kings ‡, that was worthy of being put into such a Case of Gold, as *Alexander* kept *Homer's* Works in. He mark'd out Lessons for all sovereign Princes, and taught them the Art of reigning over Hearts, and of being more absolute by Virtue and by Justice, than by all the refin'd Policy of the *Italians*. Of this Nation there have been some Authors whose dangerous Works have been look'd upon as Master-pieces. *Machiavel*, among others, has distinguish'd himself by his political Writings. If I were a Sovereign, I wou'd order all those Writings of his to be burnt, that

\* Archbishop of *Cambray*.

† Duke of *Burgundy*.

‡ *Adventures of Telemachus*.

subject Virtue to a Precaution, to which they teach that every thing shou'd be sacrific'd. 'Tis ridiculous to attempt to justify the use of those Books, by asserting that Politics are a Talent absolutely necessary for Sovereigns. I have already shewn that true Wisdom has no need of Rules whereby to learn how to shake off the Yoke of Virtue and Honour. A King may vanquish his Enemies by his Wisdom, without having recourse to Fraud and Perjury; he may keep his Subjects in their Duty, without reducing them to Slavery. *There's no Necessity*, says a famous Nazarene Author, *of either Art or Learning for the Exercise of Tyranny*. To what Purpose then are all the Books of extravagant Politics, especially as there are Works in being\*, which teach us to do by Virtue every thing that can be done by Artifice.

These, dear *Isaac*, are my Sentiments of that Policy so much boasted of by the *Italians*; and perhaps if the *Genoese* had conform'd to my Notions, and instead of attempting to reduce the *Corficans* to their lamentable Condition, and thereby to drive them to a Situation in which they cou'd not stir, if they had treated them in a more gentle Manner, they wou'd have play'd a much better Game. Be it as it will, they are now very much embarras'd, and the Lord *Theodore* gives them a vast deal of Uneasiness. - He has actually block'd up some of the Towns of the Island; he is Master of the open Country, and may perhaps in a little time undertake something considerable. We are assur'd that three Ships have been seen on the Coast of *Corfica* without any Flag, and that they are laden with Ammunition. 'Tis said they are Succours which are arriv'd very fortunately for

\* *Telemachus*.

Lord *Theodore*. If it be so, from whence did those Ships come? Has *Merlin* the Inchanter sent them from the fortunate Island? No body knows any thing of the Matter. But some People pretend that they came from the Road of *Barcelona*. If that be the Case, the Comedy is like to draw to a Conclusion, and we shall soon see the Commencement of the fifth Act. Tho' the unravelling of this Piece is very pleasant, I don't believe that the *Genoese* half like it. Nevertheless we must wait a little while longer, before we can advance any thing that has the Appearance of Truth: If it be certain that some Vessels are arriv'd with Succours to King *Theodore*, the Place from whence they sail'd will be a very great Guide to the Conjectures that may be made. But if this be unknown, People can only guess in the Dark: Notwithstanding what some Politicians say, who talk of this Affair as if King *Theodore* had been so complaisant as to let them into his Secret; this is all we can be sure of, that one may affirm with good Reason, that what Turn soever the Affair takes, his Reign will be of a short Duration \*.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live content and happy.

\* His Reign has been short indeed; for upon the Arrival of Troops solicited by the *Genoese* from *France*, which undertook to be the Mediator betwixt the Republic and the *Corficans* (but is now the Master of the Island) *Theodore* quitted the Island, after having made his Party believe he shou'd soon return with powerful Succours; but the only News we have had of him since, is, that he was committed Prisoner to the Castle of *Gaeta*, by Order of the Court of *Naples*, but remov'd from thence on board a Ship by Command of a superior Power; and what *Merlin* has done with him, no body knows.



## L E T T E R LXXIV.

*From ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Alexandria, but formerly a Rabbi, at Constantinople, to AARON MONCECA, at Paris.*

THE first Letter which I wrote to thee from *Egypt*, must have given thee some general Idea of the Ruins of *Alexandria*; but I am now preparing to entertain thee with some Particulars, having made myself fully acquainted with a great many things since I arrived here.

*Alexandria*, as it now stands, is the second Town that was built out of the Ruins of the antient City of that Name. When the first was taken by the *Arabians*, those People who were accusom'd to live in the Fields under Tents, had no Taste for Towns, but despised them. They look'd upon Palaces as Prisons, and therefore pull'd down the finest and most stately, and employ'd the Materials in building sorry Houses, which were hardly better in Appearance than wretched Hovels; and they preserv'd the Columns, and some other Pieces of Architecture for their Mosques. Antient *Alexandria* was in a manner destroy'd, so that this once great City was deserted, and became a Heap of Rubbish; for within its Walls there were more Ruins than inhabited Houses. The *Mahometan* Princes reduc'd its Circumference to the People that remain'd in it. One of *Saladin's* Successors made use of the Ruins of the old City



City, which was abandon'd, for building the new one, which was not above ten Miles in Compass; and the Walls of this new City, with the hundred Towers with which they are flank'd, were partly built out of the Ruins of the Palaces. It has a double Circumference, and there are Roads made at the Foot of the Towers, by which the Soldiers that are in Garrison may walk round it, secured from Insults either from within or without by the double Wall. The Towers which join both, are very large, and of a prodigious Height; and each of 'em will easily contain above Five hundred Men, and has above a hundred Rooms, all arch-roof'd like those of certain Caserns which I have seen in my Travels in *Germany*; so that a Garrison of Fifty thousand Men might be put into the modern *Alexandria*, without incommoding the Inhabitants. From hence thou may'st judge of the vast Extent of the old City.

Some People who know no better, pretend that the Walls which I have been describing to thee, were subsisting in the Time of the *Romans*; but a Man who will venture to assert this, must have no Knowledge of History: For were it so, the Extent of this City wou'd not have been the fifteenth Part of what we know it must have been at that Time: And unless a Man be stark blind, he will easily be convinc'd by his own Observation, that these Walls cou'd not have been built either by the *Greeks* or the *Romans*; for they consist of a vast Number of broken Pieces of Marble and Pillars, with Stones mingled here and there; and the Walls of the new *Alexandria* are a Mark of the Ruins and Spoils of the old City. But after all, dear *Monceca*, this modern *Alexandria* which I am describing to thee, is not the true City of *Alexandria*, as it subsists at this Day; and there are scarce Two hundred

hundred Persons that inhabit the Ruins which it contains. 'Tis so deserted, in short, that in the Night-time, and till it is quite broad Day, there is no passing it without running a very great Risque of being robb'd; the most solitary Forest being a much safer Place than within its Walls. The old Buildings which subsisted there, having been partly destroyed by Time, and partly by Wars, the People weary of dwelling among Ruins were resolv'd to change to a more agreeable Habitation; they settled themselves by degrees towards that Place which is call'd the *Port-neuf*, or New Harbour, exactly upon the Sea-side: There they founded a third *Alexandria*, and quite abandon'd the second, wherein there are only a few Mosques left standing, which they have preserv'd for the sake of their Beauty. This new City is as much inferiour to the second *Alexandria*, as the second was to the antient and true one.

I find, dear *Monceca*, 'tis the same with Empires as it is with Men: They rise to a certain Degree, then sink insensibly, and at last totally run to Ruin. Thus has the Empire of the East pass'd from the *Persians* to the *Greeks*, from the *Greeks* to the *Romans*, and from the *Romans* to the *Turks*. How do we know to whom it will be transferr'd some Ages hence? Perhaps the Time of such Revolution is not very distant. We observe the Formation of some new Empires to be almost as sudden as the Rise of some Men, and the Fall and Extinction of such Empires as quick as that of wretched Mortals. A Man who forty or fifty Years before the Reign of *Alexander*, should have told the *Macedonians* that they wou'd have been Masters of all *Asia*, and of a Part of *Europe*, wou'd undoubtedly have been reckon'd a Madman: For the thing happen'd so suddenly, that if we had  
not

not as much Certainty of the Fact as we have, one wou'd imagine the Histories of it that are handed down to us to be only Romances.

If the late King of *Sweden* had not lost that famous Battle which preserv'd his Rival on the Throne, what Countries might he not have been Master of? What a sudden Revolution might not have happen'd when the said King of *Sweden*, was a Fugitive in *Turkey*, if a Number of Peasants pick'd up in haste, and mounted upon Horses, for most part without either Saddle or Bridle, had not defeated the *Danes*, who strove to force their Way into *Sweden*, which was then destitute of Money and Troops, without a King, and without Hopes of Succours? To what a pass was all that Glory of *Charles XII.* reduc'd? He ran a risque of acting the same low Part under the Wing of the Grand Signior, as the Pretender does under that of the sovereign Pontiff.

If *Lewis XIV* had won the Battle of *Hochstet*, what wou'd have become of the Empire? I don't pretend to say what, but I fancy that at least it ran as great a Hazard, as it did when the *Turks* besieg'd *Vienna*. *France* was not in the most happy way, if some Years after that, Marshal *Villars* had not beat the Allies at *Denain*. Almost all Empires have had some dangerous Shock at one time or another, tho' they have had a happy Escape, but perhaps at another, time the Disorder may prove mortal.

When the *Huns*, the *Goths*, the *Vandals*, and that Swarm of People that came from the Northern Provinces, ravag'd the *Gauls* Country and *Italy*, they overturn'd and destroy'd almost all the Dominions they came to, and quite chang'd the Face and Form of *Europe*. What are become of the old *Romans* at this Day? Perhaps there are none even

at *Rome* itself, but the Descendants of the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Gauls*, and not a Stain remaining of *Roman* Blood.

I think, dear *Monceca*, that I have Reason to say, that as soon as an Empire is arriv'd to a certain Point of Elevation, it diminishes insensibly; and those which have acquir'd their Grandeur with the greatest Rapidity, sink likewise with the greater Ease.

The *Switzers* have subsisted for a good Number of Ages, without having suffer'd any very material Changes, because as they are careful to preserve their Liberty and their Country, they have not abandon'd themselves to the blind Ambition of making Conquests.

*Venice* and *Genoa* by grasping too much Country, have reduc'd themselves to a sad Condition. In the Space of a Century, the former lost two Kingdoms \*; and not many Years ago it was robb'd of a flourishing Province †: But perhaps it will enjoy more quiet, and not be subject to such Accidents in the Mediocrity to which it is now reduc'd. The latter is at a Plunge, it has just lost all *Corfica*, and will soon be in as melancholy a Situation as the Republic of *Lucca*. That proud City of *Genoa*, which formerly made the Emperors of *Constantinople* tremble ‡, cannot defend itself now against a meer Soldier of Fortune ||; with a Rabble of sorry Peasants under his Command, half naked, and half starv'd.

\* *Cyprus* and *Candia*.

† The *Morca*.

‡ The *Genoese* were once Masters of *Pera*, one of the principal Suburbs of *Constantinople*.

|| The Baron *de Newhoff*.

A Mediocrity is sometimes of as much Service to the Continuance and Preservation of Governments, as it is to the Tranquility and Felicity of the People. The *Dutch* have that wise Maxim, not to be ambitious of making Conquests. The Government of the United Provinces reasons and thinks as sensibly as an honest Man, the Father of his Family, who content to leave his Children a Patrimony well cultivated, does not desire to increase it by incroaching on the Fields and Estates of his Neighbours.

I shou'd be glad to hear any one good Argument to justify the Theft of great Robbers; then I should believe *Julius Cæsar* and *Alexander* were honest Men; but till then, I am tempted to consider them as a couple of illustrious Highwaymen, who had several excellent Qualities which were obscur'd by an invincible Inclination to Robbery. Why is it not as great a Crime to rob a Town, as to steal a Cabbage out of a Garden? *Cicero* attempted to prove that all Sins were equally criminal; but he never presum'd to carry the Paradox so far as to maintain, that it was not as sinful to rob a great deal, as to pilfer a little.

I return to *Alexandria*. There are still to be seen within the Inclosure of the Walls that I have been describing to thee, certain Fragments of Architecture that are worthy the Admiration of all good Judges. Such is that stately Colonnade in the Middle of this Inclosure, which consists of a Row of Pillars still standing, of an extraordinary Bulk and Height, that form'd an Oval, in the Middle of which was the most superb public Square of *Alexandria*. The immense Ruins near this Colonnade, seem to denote that the finest Palaces of this antient City fronted that stately Piece of Architecture every way, or those Palaces perhaps advanced

vanc'd to those Pillars on which the former Walls rested, and so form'd the Porticos under which the People walk'd.

Next to this famous Monument, the greatest Curiosities are the two Needles, or Obelisks, which are ascrib'd to *Cleopatra*; one is still standing, and the other thrown down, and half bury'd in the Sand. The four Sides of these Needles are full of hieroglyphical Figures, which give only a faint Idea of what they represented to the View of the Antients, to whom they were speaking Characters.

The famous Column of *Pompey* is another Piece worthy of Admiration. Of all the Splendid Antiquities of *Alexandria* and its Neighbourhood, there scarce remain any Ruins so entire as this Column. It has very beautiful Proportions, and the nicest Eye can find no Defect in it; it consists of three Pieces, of which the Chapter makes one, the Shaft and three Feet of the base form the second, and the rest of the Base the third. 'Tis eighty Foot between the Base and the Chapter, and a hundred and ten Foot in height; so that I take it to be the highest and the biggest in the World.

The antient Monuments of which I have been treating, dear *Monceca*, must one Day have the same Fate as the many others that have preceded them; they will be demolish'd and overthrown. They have already receiv'd some Shocks by Time, and 'tis quite unknown now by whom they were set up. The Names of *Pompey* and *Cleopatra*, which are fix'd to these Pillars, are not, according to all Appearance, the Names of those who erected them; and why those Names are given to them, there's no Certainty. Temples, Palaces, Triumphal Arches, do not immortalise either Sovereigns or private Persons. 'Tis great Actions or Writings that are sure to make us live for ever in the  
Memory

Memory of Man\*. How many Monuments have there not been destroy'd since *Alcibiades*, *Themistocles*, *Miltiades*, and those other illustrious *Greeks* whom the Fame of their Actions has transmitted to the latest Posterity! How many Temples and Palaces have been overturn'd since the Death of *Homer*! But that illustrious Genius still lives amongst us, and he is the Darling of all Nations now, as he was formerly of the *Greeks*. They are only the meaner Sort, who, for want of Talents of their own to pierce thro' the obscure Night of Time, endeavour to outstretch it by immense Piles of Stones and Marble.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, live contented and happy, and take great Care of thy self.

\* Exegi Monumentum ære perennius  
Regali situ Pyramidum altius;  
Quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens,  
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis  
Annorum Series, & fuga temporum.  
Non omnis moriar; multaque Pars mei  
Vitabit Libitinam: usque ego postera  
Crescam Laude recens; dum Capitolium  
Scandet cum tacitâ virgine Pontifex.

*Hor. Ode xxx. lib. iiii.*

*Thus translated by Mr. CREECH.*

'Tis finish'd; I have rais'd a Monument  
More strong than Brass, and of a vast Extent;  
Higher than *Egypt's* stately Pyramid,  
That costly Monument of Kingly Pride,  
As high as Heav'n the Top, as Earth the Basis wide:  
Which eating Showers, nor North Wind's feeble Blasts,  
Nor whirling Time, nor Flight of Years can waste:  
While *Horace* shall not die, his Song shall save  
The greatest Portion from the greedy Grave:  
Still fresh I'll grow, still green in future Praise,  
Till Time is lost, and *Rome* itself decays;  
Till the chief Priest and silent Maid no more  
Ascend the Capitol, and *Jove* adore.



## L E T T E R LXXV.

From JACOB BRITO, at Lyons, to  
AARON MONCECA, at Paris.

I Am arriv'd at *Lyons*, from whence I propose to set out as soon as I can for *Montpellier*, where I shall make but a very short Stay, because I am in great haste to go to *Spain*. The Situation I am in, dear *Monceca*, enables me to judge for myself of the Accounts thou hast given me of the Manners and Customs of the *French*. I find thy Reflections just, and the Hints I have had from thy Letters are of infinite Service to me; I have some Foretaste of many things, that I see and examine very sedately, which wou'd surprize and astonish me, if I was not prepossess'd.

At my Quarters there are two *Parisian Jansenists*, banish'd to this City by a *Lettre de Cachet*; there's nothing so pleasant as to hear them dispute with a young Abbé, who hopes to get a Benefice by the Interests of the *Jesuits*. It must be own'd that he richly deserves the Present they give him reason to expect, and that he battles it for the Party wherever he comes with infinite Courage. When he cannot defend himself by Arguments, he has recourse to Invectives; and very often, if we did not check his Rage and Impetuosity, he wou'd take one of those *Jansenists* by the Collar, and so their Disputes wou'd be decided by dint of Fist.

Two or three Days ago, a Priest, who is a bitter Enemy to the *Jesuits*, came and din'd at our Quarters:



Quarters: ‘ I have an Account, *said he*, from *Dole*  
 ‘ that Father *Girard* has wrought several Miracles  
 ‘ since his Death; but if it be true, there’s not a  
 ‘ Fellow that’s broke upon the Wheel or hang’d,  
 ‘ but may work Miracles too; the Gibbets and  
 ‘ Gallows of *Montfaucon* will make special Cata-  
 ‘ combs; and Reliques will become Dog-cheap. You  
 ‘ are a Fool, *says the young Abbé to this Jansenist Priest*, and to do you Justice you ought to  
 ‘ be tuck’d up by the Neck to those Gibbets you  
 ‘ talk of, in Company with Father *Nicholas, la Ca-*  
 ‘ *diere*, and all her Knavish Family. I’ll call my  
 ‘ Landlady, and tell her that I am resolv’d to leave  
 ‘ her House, if she hereafter entertains Persons that  
 ‘ are excommunicated *ipso facto*, and the Adherents  
 ‘ of such a Heretic as the Impostor *Paris*. Me-  
 ‘ thinks, little Gentleman, *said the Jansenist*, you  
 ‘ give yourself mighty Airs. No more than I ought  
 ‘ to do, *reply’d my little Abbé*, and I swear to you  
 ‘ by my Band, and the Cassock on my Back, that if  
 ‘ you ever think fit to take up the Cudgels, and to  
 ‘ declaim against worthy Men wherever I am, I’ll  
 ‘ teach you to hold your Prating. You! *reply’d*  
 ‘ *the Jansenist*, shall such a Snotty-nose Prig as  
 ‘ you make me hold my tongue, when the Re-  
 ‘ spect I owe to my Prince can’t silence me! By  
 ‘ G—d I shou’d be glad to see how you wou’d go  
 ‘ about it. The thing is very easy, *said the Abbé*,  
 ‘ and if you say but a Word more, I’ll imme-  
 ‘ diately stop your Mouth by letting a Plate fly at  
 ‘ your Head! What the Devil! *reply’d the Jan-*  
 ‘ *senist*, a Plate at my Head! A Plate at the Head  
 ‘ of a Batchelor of the *Sorbonne*, thou little Ex-  
 ‘ crement of *Loyola*! I’ll make you to know who  
 ‘ you talk to. At these Words the *Jansenist* was  
 ‘ so provok’d, that he snatch’d a Bottle, and if the  
 ‘ two Officers, who laugh’d ready to burst them-

‘ selves to see this Ecclesiastical Challenge, had not  
 ‘ been so good-natur’d as to check the Fury of the  
 ‘ two Antagonists, I shou’d have been a quiet Spec-  
 ‘ tator of a most bloody Skirmish.’

After these two Champions were parted, ‘ Gen-  
 ‘ tlemen, *said the Officers*, you don’t observe the  
 ‘ Rules of the Military Art in your Squabbles; be-  
 ‘ fore People proceed to Violence, they shou’d by  
 ‘ a Manifesto justify their Motives for declaring  
 ‘ War. This is the Practice of Sovereigns: As  
 ‘ for you, Sir, you are an Enemy to Father Gi-  
 ‘ rard and the *Jesuits*; tell us your Reasons for  
 ‘ it, and then the other Gentleman will please to  
 ‘ acquaint us with his. And what wou’d you have  
 ‘ me say, *reply’d the Jansenist*, are you ignorant  
 ‘ of what all the World knows? Who can help  
 ‘ inveighing against a Man that has made Religion  
 ‘ a Cloak for his Debauchery, who has abused  
 ‘ his Character as Confessor to debauch his Penitent,  
 ‘ and who, in short, by the Help of the Devil, got  
 ‘ the Ascendant over her to such a Degree, that  
 ‘ he cou’d obtain her Favours as often as he pleas’d,  
 ‘ and she had not the Power to deny him.’

The Abbé who was quite a-gog to answer his  
 Antagonist, had not Patience to let him empty  
 his Quiver of Reproaches. ‘ Father Girard, *said*  
 ‘ he, is innocent in the Sight of all those who  
 ‘ don’t suffer themselves to be influenc’d by Ill-will  
 ‘ and Prejudice. He was the innocent Victim of  
 ‘ a Conspiracy form’d between Father Nicholas,  
 ‘ Father Cadriere, and his Sister. The *Jansenists*  
 ‘ intended to give a mortal Blow to an illustrious  
 ‘ Society, by destroying one of its principal Mem-  
 ‘ bers. They did not matter how much they  
 ‘ dishonour’d Religion, provided they cou’d crush  
 ‘ their Enemies.

‘ These then, Gentlemen, *said one of the Officers*, are all the Arguments that both of you have to produce. Alas! I’ll prove to each of you, that you are both in the wrong to dispute so eagerly upon Suppositions that are equally false. I’ll first answer your Reasons, *contin’d the Officer, addressing himself to the Jansenist*, you say that Father Girard, abusing his Character, made his Penitent a Demoniack and debauch’d her: I shall prove one of these Two Things to you; either, that Father Girard did not seduce *la Cadriere*; or that she gave her hearty Consent.

‘ If the Advocates who pleaded for Father Girard had been allow’d to plead from the Book of Natural Reason, and had not been oblig’d to adopt as an Article of Faith a ridiculous Notion, which has no other Foundation and Reality than the Writings of certain Monks, and the Preachments of some Country Curates, they wou’d have absolutely deny’d the Possibility of the Existence of Magicians, and that any Witchcraft cou’d determine the Will. Suppose that a Philosopher, accusom’d to make use of his Reason, was pleading the Cause of Father Girard in the Court of the Parliament of *Provence*, *Is it possible*, he would say, *that a Man who has liv’d fifty Years in Reputation for his Virtue, should be accused of the most heinous of Crimes, and but one Proof produc’d of it contrary to all the Notions of Evidence? Then the Philosopher calling sound Philosophy to his Aid*, Let us see, *says he*, Gentlemen if it was possible for Father Girard to direct the Will of *la Cadriere*, to put her into Trances, to give her Marks in her Body, to make her sweat Blood thro’ her Pores, and to cause Crowns of Thorns to sprout from her Head, he absent all the while, and acting only by the Aid of Philtres.

' 'Tis certain that several Liquors are capable of  
 ' producing extraordinary Effects in us, and of quite  
 ' changing our Habits. The Remedies that are in  
 ' Medicines, the subtle Poisons, whose Effects are  
 ' as quick as that of a Dagger stuck into the Heart,  
 ' are convincing Proofs of the Power which certain  
 ' Philtres have to act upon our Senses. But is it  
 ' not absurd to maintain, that they produce Ef-  
 ' fects contrary to Nature, and alter the very Es-  
 ' sence of Things? Is it not ridiculous to say, that  
 ' a Draught has the Power to make Wood and  
 ' Thorns grow, and sprout forth from the Brain of  
 ' a Person, and then to shrink back into the same  
 ' Brain as a Snail into its Shell? To this must be  
 ' referr'd that certain Axiom receiv'd by all Phi-  
 ' losophers, *A thing cannot communicate what it has*  
 ' *not it self*. Now how can a Liquor produce  
 ' Wood, and form *la Cadriere's* Crown? For when  
 ' she was in that famous Trance wherein that mi-  
 ' raculous Crown appear'd, 'tis agreed that Fa-  
 ' ther *Girard* was absent: It must be therefore  
 ' own'd that Philtres not being able to produce  
 ' those Thorns, and Father *Girard*, when absent,  
 ' not being able to give them, *la Cadriere* her self  
 ' must have plac'd them in her Head-dress. When  
 ' she had shewn herself in her pretended Trances,  
 ' she went at least halves with Father *Girard*,  
 ' in imposing upon the Public, and I defy any  
 ' one that makes use of his Reason to think  
 ' otherwise.

' 'Tis extremely ridiculous to presume to assert  
 ' that Father *Girard*, as powerful as God himself,  
 ' was able to determine the Will of *la Cadriere* by  
 ' a superior Motion, in such a manner as that it  
 ' must necessarily be forc'd to yield to the Designs  
 ' of her Confessor. All the Love-Potions in the  
 ' World

‘ World cannot reduce and determine the Will to  
 ‘ a fix’d Point. *Matter can only act upon Matter.*  
 ‘ How then can a liquid Draught act directly upon  
 ‘ the Will, to produce a certain and determinate  
 ‘ Effect? Otherwise it only operates by the Sen-  
 ‘ tions and Motions which it produces on the Body.  
 ‘ Thus by Philtres the Blood may be heated, the  
 ‘ Spirits may be dispos’d to Love, and Motives of  
 ‘ Concupiscence may be rais’d, but they who take  
 ‘ them are not thereby determin’d to one particular  
 ‘ Object more than to another.

‘ The Will remains free; and by disposing the  
 ‘ Heart to a tender Passion, an unknown Person  
 ‘ may as easily be the better for it as a Lover. The  
 ‘ Favours which the Agitation of the Spirits, and  
 ‘ the Desires of Concupiscence have render’d easy  
 ‘ to obtain, are absolutely dispos’d of by Whimsy  
 ‘ and the Will. *La Cadere* might therefore as  
 ‘ well have made any other Person happy: All the  
 ‘ Philtres of Father *Girard* did not force her to de-  
 ‘ termine herself in his Favour, much less to give  
 ‘ such a Grace to the Frauds and Miracles which  
 ‘ I have prov’d, cou’d only be operated by the stu-  
 ‘ dy’d Craft of this pretended Saintess.

‘ You must therefore own, Messieurs *Jansenists*,  
 ‘ either that the Trances, the Raptures, and Mira-  
 ‘ cles of *la Cadere*, have been only invented for the  
 ‘ Purpose, and to ruin that *Jesuit*, or that *la Ca-*  
 ‘ *diere* was Partner with him in all his Impostures,  
 ‘ I give you the Choice of these; but which way  
 ‘ soever you decide it, you must own that the Fe-  
 ‘ male Saint, for whom you are so zealous, deserves  
 ‘ infinite Contempt instead of your Esteem.

‘ Now I come to you, Monsieur l’Abbé, con-  
 ‘ tinu’d the Officer, and I will prove to you,  
 ‘ that such a Man as you, whose State demands a

' strict Morality, ought not to be an Advocate for  
 ' Father *Girard*. You will readily grant that Fa-  
 ' ther *Girard* was no Fool; he was a *Jesuit*, and  
 ' a *Jesuit* for whom his Order had an Esteem.  
 ' After what has been said, no Person can be at a  
 ' Loss to know his Temper and Principles. I ask  
 ' you then, Sir, if you believe that a Man who is  
 ' not very glad to impose upon the Public, by  
 ' affecting to be the Dupe himself, cou'd give into  
 ' all the Extravagances of *la Cadiere*, and twenty  
 ' or thirty other pious Ladies, most of whom were  
 ' at least without having taken Love-Potions, as  
 ' much heated as *la Cadiere*? The noted *Batarel*;  
 ' the principal and the most illustrious of this ho-  
 ' nest *Jesuit's* Female Saints, cool'd her Flames  
 ' sometimes by amorous Kisses; which is a Fact  
 ' he himself has own'd \*. But alas! Sir, is that  
 ' the Behaviour of a chaste, prudent Priest, who is  
 ' zealous for the Cause of his Religion? Own  
 ' therefore, that if Father *Girard* was neither a  
 ' Magician, nor guilty of spiritual Incest, he was  
 ' at least a great Knave, and a consummate Hy-  
 ' pocrite. Don't believe that while I accuse him,  
 ' I am for justifying his Adversary Father *Nicholas*;

\* Being interrogated, if he did not kiss Miss *Batarel*  
 at *Cadiere's* House? he answered, That as he went to  
 take his Leave of *Cadiere*, the Night before he departed  
 for *Ouliuille*, *Batarel* being there at the same time,  
*Batarel* desir'd him to step aside for one Moment into a  
 Chamber, on pretence of speaking to him in private;  
 and that the said *Batarel* shutting the Chamber-Door on  
 a sudden, embrac'd the Respondent without saying a  
 Word to him; upon which he flung himself immediately  
 out of her Arms. *General Collection of the Pieces re-*  
*lating to the Process between Miss Cadiere, &c.* Inter-  
 rogat. 149. tom. v. p. 40.

‘ for he was at least as guilty as the other, and not  
‘ near so scrupulous.. The *Jesuit* preserv’d a cer-  
‘ tain Decency; as he was examining a Wound un-  
‘ der the Left Breast, he had an Excuse ready if he  
‘ had taken a Fancy to have kiss’d it, being politic  
‘ in all his Ways, the austere and pious Look ne-  
‘ ver abandon’d him \*. But the *Carmelite* acted  
‘ like a *Carmelite*; he never once minc’d the Matter  
‘ and without standing upon Trifles, he used the  
‘ Privileges of his Order †.

‘ You must own therefore, M. l’Abbé, that your  
‘ Zeal for Father *Girard* is extravagant; and to tell  
‘ you frankly my Mind, a Man must be very fond  
‘ of defending strange Paradoxes, who offers to justi-  
‘ fy him. The Public cries out against the Arret  
‘ of the Parliament of *Provence*, by which those  
‘ three Persons were acquitted; but since it did not  
‘ punish them all three alike, I think it cou’d not  
‘ do better.’

How just soever this Officer’s Arguments appear’d,  
the little Abbé and the *Jansenists* did not seem very  
well pleas’d; however, they each went his way,  
knitting their Brows at one another most terribly.

The Post is just going off, and I conclude my  
Letter.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, live content and  
happy.

\* Being interrogated, If he never kiss’d that Wound?  
He answer’d, No; but that, If he had thought it pro-  
per to kiss the Ulcer, he shou’d have only follow’d the  
Example of the Saints, and have done it either from a  
Principle of Religion, or for Mortification. *Collect.*  
Tom. v. p. 34.

† ’Tis prov’d in several Parts of the Process, that Fa-  
ther *Nicholas* had a strong Inclination to debauch *la Ca-  
diere*, and that they went to Bed in the Country in the  
the same Chamber. *Collect.* Tom. v. p. 103.



## L E T T E R LXXVI.

From AARON MONCECA, at Paris,  
to JACOB BRITO, at Lyons.

I Receiv'd thy Letter from *Lyons*; the Story of the *Jansenist* and the little Abbé made me very merry. The Officer who endeavour'd to reconcile them, seem'd to me to be a Man of good Sense, and I am inclin'd to believe that he has a just Notion of the Affair of the Jesuit *Girard*. I was always convinc'd in my own Mind that there was Knavery, Craft, and Imposture on both Sides. *Cadiere's* pretending to be bewitch'd, plainly shews the Ridicule of one part of her Depositions; yet how absurd soever it was to accuse her of being bewitch'd, it was absolutely necessary; for otherwise Father *Girard* cou'd not have been attack'd; and *Cadiere* being a Partner in his Crimes, wou'd have been liable to Punishment: She wou'd therefore have kept silence; but as soon as a Verdict was given that she was determin'd by a superiour Power, she wou'd be no longer guilty, and the whole wou'd be chargeable upon the Devil and the Conjuror.

The *Nazarenes* have such a strong Faith in Witchcraft, Sorcery, and the like, that there is nothing so absurd but they are by this means made to believe: Imposture becomes a Miracle, and is thought worthy of being regarded as an Effect of the immediate Will of the Deity, the Moment that such Imposture is cover'd with the Veil of Obsession and Possession. There's nothing so pleasant as the Dialogues which some Friars have  
with



with the Demoniacs whom they exorcise. They enter into a thousand little Familiarities with the Devil. They crack Jokes upon one another; and one wou'd be apt to take *Belzebub* for a *Merry-Andrew*, and *Satan* for an amiable complaisant *Petit-Maitre*. The following are the original Terms of one of those infernal Conversations: I fancy they may be an Amusement to thee. 'Tis a Monk that speaks.

' The Sister *Bonaventure* being possess'd by a Devil call'd *Arfaxa*, came to me to be confess'd, saying, she wou'd go to no body else; and it must be observ'd, that this Devil was always fond to talk to me \*.'

Thou perceiv'st, dear *Brito*, that the *Nazarene* Monks know all the Devils by their Names and Surnames, and that the latter have a Kindness for the Friars, and are very eager for an Opportunity to converse with them. I must own to thee, that I should be very apt to think that there's an actual Sympathy between the Monks and the Devils, tho' I fancy the latter are not near so malicious: As thou wilt perceive by the Trick which this same Friar play'd the Devil *Arfaxa*. His own Words are these:

' I fell down upon my Knees before this Devil, telling him that my Design was to come and confound my Pride, by that of the Devils, and to learn Humility of them, in spite of their Teeth. This Devil was enrag'd to see me in this State, and told me, that he had received a Command to prevent me. And as I was continuing to make my Obeisance, he was resolv'd to take the Adv.

\* The Collection of what pass'd at the exorcising of certain Nuns of the Town of *Louviers*, by the Reverend Father *Gaufre*, Printed at *Paris* with Permission, Anno 1643. p. 30, and 31.

‘ vantage of it, and said to me, *Thou adorest me ;*  
 ‘ I reply’d, *thou art too infamous, Villain.* I con-  
 sider thee as the Creature of my God, and the Ob-  
 ject of his Wrath ; therefore I am for submitting  
 to thee, because thou dost not deserve it ; and  
 instantly I will come to kiss thy Feet. *The De-  
 vil surpriz’d at this Motion, hinder’d me.* What  
 dost thou think, dear Brito, of all these Tricks ?  
 A Monk must be very crafty and very malignant ;  
 if he has the Secret to make a Fool of the Devil,  
 and to put him into a Rage. Who wou’d have  
 said to *Arfata*, that the Impatience he had to con-  
 verse with this Friar wou’d subject him to be ban-  
 ter’d and jeer’d. Yet that is not all the Scene ; the  
 Conclusion of which is much more mortifying to  
 the Devil, and more for the Honour of the Monk.  
 Upon this, continues he, *I conjur’d this Devil to*  
*shew me as far as was possible the Will of God, either*  
*that I should kiss his Feet, or he kiss mine.* *The Answer*  
*he made me was,* Thou know’st what Impulse thou  
 hast from God ; follow it.

This Answer favours as much of the *Norman* as  
 of the Devil ; *Arfata* was not a Fool ; he was  
 afraid to be the Cause of his Enemy’s Humiliation,  
 and by that means to open the Gates of Heaven to  
 him : Nor did he care on the other hand to kiss  
 the Feet of a Friar, who made such scurvy Sport  
 with a Devil that had shewn such a Friendship for  
 him. He therefore left the Question undecided ;  
 believing that the Monk perhaps wou’d not deter-  
 mine himself ; but he had Cunning enough to out-  
 wit *Arfata*. He fell at his Feet, and kiss’d them ;  
 at which the Devil was heartily enrag’d ; *After-*  
*wards,* says this Friar, *I commanded him, by the*  
*Reliques of Father Bernard, to kiss mine ; which he*  
*did with great Readiness.*

This,

This, dear *Brito*, is sheer Malice to Perfection; and sure I am, that *Arfaxa* little thought that the Reliques of Father *Bernard* wou'd serve him such a slippery Trick.

I know not whether thou took'st notice of this Devil's ready Obedience, as soon as Mention was made to him of St. *Bernard's* Skeleton: The Virtue of it must be very particular, since 'tis capable of influencing the infernal Spirits. This History seems to confirm the Stories that are told of the Charms perform'd by the Witches of old Time; *Horace* speaks of one *Canidia*, who in the Composition of her Philtres made use of Bones which she dug out of Church-yards. The *Nazarenes* fancy that in some Bones there is a great Virtue. The *Mahometans*, especially the *Persians*, have the same Notion. But in my Opinion, People must be very fond of giving an Air of Mystery and Religion to the most common things, by supposing a Piece of Earth to be sacred, and, as one may say, a Part of the Deity.

What the *Nazarenes* call Reliques, is only a simple Portion of Matter, of a Piece with all the rest, and which has no more Virtue, than the least and most contemptible Part of it. For if the Matter of which a Bone is form'd, had Qualities superior to the Powers of common Matter, and partook of the Divine Power, it cou'd never lose its Advantages. Now there is nothing so easy as to bring the Head of a Saint, to form in process of Time a Part of the Body of a Highway-man: Then the Matter which compos'd the Head of the Saint will have certainly lost its divine Virtue. And 'tis as ridiculous to assert that a thing can use its internal Qualities and Faculties by the different Form that is given to it, as it is to say, that a Piece of Marble becomes cold because it is square. But 'tis still more difficult to comprehend, how those Bones

can

can lose their Attributes, because, being in some respect Divine, they must be the less subject to Alteration. Suppose that a Beast should eat the Head of a Saint, and that this Beast, kill'd by a Gipsy or a Vagabond, shou'd serve him, after being salted, for his Diet six Months, 'tis certain that several of the Parts of the Matter that form'd the Head of the Saint will be diffus'd in the Members of the Gipsy. I demand, whether they will then have the Virtue to work Miracles, and to sanctify the *offending* and *unclean* Parts to which they will be join'd. If it shou'd be answer'd, that they have no longer any Power; I deny with good Reason that they ever cou'd have any; because 'tis not the different Configuration that gives the internal Qualities to Matter; a Loadstone having the same Attraction of Iron, be it round or square. Perhaps it will be said, that God permits that those Bones shou'd operate while they are Bones, but not when they are pulveriz'd. If so, I challenge the most zealous *Nazarenes* to shew me in the Books of their chief Doctors\*, where God has reveal'd that he has granted a Power to Bones to act as strongly as the Deity; and tho' I am a *Jew*, I am ready in that Case to submit implicitly to their Opinion; but I have no fear that they will be able to convince me: For there's not a Word said of Bones in the fundamental Books of their Religion.

Tho' I make this public Declaration against the Superstition of Reliques, I don't approve of the extraordinary Contempt which certain People affect of the precious Remains of Persons that have render'd themselves venerable by their Piety and good Behaviour, during the whole Course of their Lives. Where is that Man who does not respect the Tomb of his Ancestors, or that durst prophane their Ashes?

\* The Apostles.

Virtuous

Virtuous Men are the Fathers of their Country, which is oblig'd to them for the Knowledge of Good, and for the Means of attaining to it. Let the *Nazarenes* honour the Tombs of some of their Ancestors as much as they will, I approve of their Maxims. But if they deify their Ashes and their Reliques; if they ascribe as much Power to them as to God himself; if with the Censer in their Hands, like to the Pagans, they cense Splinters of Bone and Shreds of Stuff upon Altars; I then condemn their extravagant Zeal, and think their Notion altogether ridiculous: So that I am almost byass'd in Favour of their Adversaries, who are in the other Extream too careless and indifferent as to the melancholy Remains of illustrious Men, the Sight of which may be a very great Motive to Virtue. Statues are erected every Day to great Monarchs, and to illustrious Generals, in order to animate their Equals, to deserve such Monuments by eminent Actions. Relics that are preserv'd carefully, and respected, are as good as stately Mausoleums and Tombs for exciting People to Virtue.

Therefore, dear *Brito*, I don't condemn the *Nazarenes*, for the Care they take in preserving certain Bones: But what I blame them for, is the Worship they pay to 'em, and the Abuse of 'em by the Monks, like the Friar I told thee of just now, a confident Lyar, who abusing the Ashes of his Father *Bernard*, commanded the Devils by the Power of a Skeleton.

The thing which has brought Reliques into Contempt, is their being bought and sold like Wares, for more or less Money, according to the Name of the Makers. Some of the sovereign Pontiffs have sold a great Number of 'em very cheap, and others have kept them up at a very extravagant Rate; they have search'd for them in all Places  
where

where they thought they could find them; and when the true ones have fail'd, they have forg'd a great number of false ones, like to certain avaricious Sovereigns, who after having drain'd their Subjects of all their Gold, give them Bits of Paper in Exchange for it of an imaginary Value. The Power which is ascrib'd to Reliques of working Miracles of all kinds, proceeds from the same Source, and 'tis Covetousness that gives them those surprizing Virtues. The sovereign Pontiffs have acted just like the Mountebanks, who for the better Sale of their Balsam, ascribe all manner of Virtues to it. Reliques, Demoniacs, and Indulgences, are three inexhaustable Mines, which bring in more Profit to the Friars, than *Peru* and *Brasil* do to the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*. All the Business is to set them off cleverly. There are certain *Nazarene* Friars that know how to extract the Quintessence of these Ecclesiastic Treasures; they exorcise even the brute Beasts, tho' there's not a *Nazarene* so silly as to believe their being possess'd with a Devil. Thou must not think this extraordinary; for the Devils take a Trip sometimes into the Bodies of Animals, when they can't find better Employment. I have read in a Book \*,

‘ That a Devil once possess'd a Cow, and that  
 ‘ he sometimes cut capers in her Belly, and some-  
 ‘ times on her Back. One *Martin*, says the Author,  
 ‘ seeing what a sad Plight the poor Beast was in,  
 ‘ order'd the Devil to let her alone, and depart.  
 ‘ The Cow was so sensible of this *Martin's* Kind-  
 ‘ ness to her, that she came politely to pay him her  
 ‘ Homage, fell on her Knees, and low'd three  
 ‘ times to shew her Gratitude.’

As ridiculous as this Tale appears, there are many much more so which the *Nazarene* People

\* See the Legend of St. *Martin*.

firmly believe to be true; they are told very gravely that the Stories of this kind are authentic, and generally acknowledg'd for Facts; and they are assur'd of this so often that they really believe it.

O Sacred Hunger of pernicious Gold!  
What Bands of Faith can impious Lucre hold \*.

Farewell, dear *Brito*, and live content and happy.



## LETTER LXXVII.

From ISAAC ONIS, a *Caraites*, at *Cairo*,  
and formerly a *Rabbi*, at *Constantinople*, to AARON MONCECA, at *Paris*.

THIS now near a Month that I arriv'd at *Cairo*, but one thing or another has prevented me from writing to thee sooner. This City owes its Foundation to one *Giauber*, Vizier of the Caliph *Meezledin*, who conquer'd *Egypt*. This Vizier caus'd a thick high Wall to be built round a Plain in which his whole Army lay encamp'd. His Master, the Caliph, a mortal Enemy of Towns, as are most of the *Arabs*, thinking this a more pleasant Residence than *Alexandria*, caus'd his Tents to be set up there; but by degrees some Houses were built in that Inclosure. In process of Time it was full of Palaces and public Structures, and at last it

\* ——— *Quid non Mortalia Pectora cogis,  
Auri sacra Fames!* Virg. *Æn.* lib. iii.  
grew.

grew to be a magnificent City, which was insensibly enrich'd with the Ruins of the Town of *Masra*, which its Citizens abandon'd in order to come and dwell in this new Place. *Giauber*, in Memory of his Conquest, had given this City the Name of *El Cabera*, which, as thou know'st, is the *Arabic* Word for *Victorious*: And from hence some Merchants of *Florence* and *Venice*, who were the first *Nazarene* Merchants that were allow'd to settle in this City, form'd the Name *el Cairo*, to which they added the Epithet *Grand*, to denote the Extent and Beauty of it \*.

That, dear *Monceca*, was the true Origin of *Cairo*; and all other Accounts of it given by Historians, are contradictory to Truth and the best *Arabian* Historians. This City is now the Metropolis of *Egypt*, and the Seat of the *Basha* who commands that Province. The Porte always trusts one of the principal Men among the *Turks* with this important Post; and he lives in a Castle, or fort of Citadel very poorly fortify'd if compared to the strong Towns of the *Nazarenes*. This Citadel was built about seven hundred Years ago, by *Saladin*.

In *Cairo* there are several Pieces of Antiquity which were brought thither in the Time of the Caliphs, either from *Alexandria*, or from Upper and Lower *Egypt*. There are also the Ruins of several old Palaces, built and inhabited by the Sovereigns of *Egypt*, and by the chief Lords of their Courts. The Gildings of the Cielings which have escap'd the Inclemencies of the Weather, still look as fresh as if the Workman had but just finish'd them. The Mosques of this City are very beautiful, but they don't come near to those of *Constantinople*.

\* See Mr. Mallet's Account of *Egypt*. Part I.



That of *Ashur*, which is the most magnificent, is far inferiour to the seven chief Mosques of the Imperial City. They are built here as in other Places, cover'd with Domes, and adorn'd with several Minarets or Steeples \*.

There are about *Cairo* several Tombs of the *Mahometan* Doctors or Santons, which are very much frequented by a great Number of Persons who pay extraordinary Devotion to them: One of the principal Tombs is that of the famous Dr. *Chafai*; 'tis almost as good an Annuity to certain Santons and Dervishes that take care to keep it in Repair, as the Chine or Rump-bone of St. *Francis* is to his Disciples the *Franciscans*. The *Turkish* Monks have as much Zeal for their Saints as the *Nazarene* Monks have for theirs. The boldest Convulsionary *Jansenist* cou'd not have fallen upon a more crafty Method than they did to secure *Chafai* to themselves.

A Sovereign of *Egypt*, who was Caliph of *Babylon*, and kept his Court there, was desirous to have the Body of this famous *Chafai* carry'd to all the Places where he chose to reside; he wrote to the Governour of *Egypt* to cause it to be taken out of the Ground, and to send it to him in a magnificent Coffin: The Governour was very sorry for this Order, because, knowing what a profound Veneration all the People had for this pretended Saint, he dreaded an Insurrection; and in order to avoid the sad Consequences which commonly attend popular Rifings, he communicated the Order which he had received to the Dervishes, whom he exhorted to submit to the Commands of their

\* They are Towers that serve for Steeples. The *Turks* call the People to Prayers regularly five times a Day.

Prince, and recommended it to them to dispose the Populace to consent to the Removal of the Saint. *I will go to-morrow*, said he to them, *and perform the Caliph's Command; do you therefore be ready with all Necessaries.* The Turkish Monks were not astonish'd at the Summons; they resolv'd to act to some purpose, and to oppose the Orders of the Sovereign, but in such a Manner as shou'd not make him their Enemy. To effect this with Ease, they resolv'd to cover their Fraud with a Miracle, and to secure Heaven on their Side. That's the grand Secret to attain to the End of the most difficult Enterprizes. They work'd all Night to finish their Project, and after having open'd the Saint's Tomb, they put combustible Matter round the Corpse, mix'd with some Phosphoruses, which wou'd take Fire as soon as they took Air. After they had prepar'd every thing, they very calmly waited for the Governor, who, on Pretence of doing the more Honour to the Saint, repair'd to his Tomb with a Retinue of ten thousand Men; tho' all this Apparatus and Pomp was only to keep the People from rising up in Arms. As soon as he was arriv'd, the Workmen began to open the Ground. When they came to the Place where the Corpse lay, and began to give Air to the Phosphoruses, the combustible Matters took Fire, and such a hot bright Flame burst out of the Tomb that they who dug there were depriv'd for some Moments of their Sight: They were the first that cry'd out *a Miracle*; the Populace did the same; and then the Priests proclaim'd that it was not the Saint's Will to quit the Place of his Retirement. The Imagination of the *Egyptians*, which is ripe for Prodigies, greedily catch'd at this; and the Tomb was instantly cover'd up again, without presuming to go any farther to work. The Governor, like  
a good.

a good Politician, and as good a Courtier, artfully took the Advantage of this pretended Miracle to satisfy the People, without slighting the Orders of his Master, to whom he sent an Account of this Prodigy which above Ten thousand Spectators cou'd certify. The Caliph, when he heard that the Saint was well, and did not care to quit his Lodging, consented to let him lie in his old Tomb, where he still continues, and where the *Mahometan* Devotees go in Crouds to pray\*.

Thou must own, dear *Monceca*, that this Prank tallies exactly with the Tricks that are play'd by the *Nazarene* Monks: Go where we will, we shall find that Superstition feeds the Avarice of certain Men who drive a scandalous Trade with their Religion, and disgrace themselves in the Opinion of Men of Sense, to whom their Knavery is soon known.

The *Egyptians* are even more superstitious than the *Turks*, and in this respect the *Spaniards* are scarce a Match for them. It seems as if in all Times this Country had been the Centre of ridiculous Ceremonies, and as if it chose to be a Lesson to other Nations, to shew them to what a Degree of Error the Human Understanding is liable. The antient *Egyptians* ador'd the vilest and most contemptible of Animals, Crocodiles, and Ichneumons; nay they deify'd Plants; O happy Nation, said *Juvenal*, on purpose to banter that stupid People, *which sees their Gods grow in their very Gardens*†. I can't imagine, dear *Monceca*, how 'twas possible for a polite People, acquainted as they were with the Sciences, and endow'd with

\* *Mallet's Account of Egypt*, Part II.

† *O Sanctas Gentes, quibus nascuntur in Hortis Numina!*

*Juv. Sat. xv. v. 10.*

a Genius, to have such blind Ideas as they had of the Deity. That the barbarous savage Nations shou'd fall into certain Errors, does not near so much surprize me: A Man who is capable of eating his Fellow-Creature with as good an Appetite as he wou'd devour a Chicken, may fall into the greatest of Errors; and no Wonder: But that a People among whom the Arts and Sciences flourish, who know and practise the most excellent Laws of Morality, shou'd have such extravagant Ideas as to deify a Calf, and carefully to nourish it in a Temple, is what I cannot for my Life comprehend. For how can it be imagin'd that a Man who makes Use of his Reason, who raises his Genius to such a Pitch as to measure the Course of the Stars, and to foresee and foretel Eclipses by an exact Calculation, can really think that a God has a Beginning and an End, and that he comes in the Form of a Calf to chew the Cud, and to browse for the Space of twelve or fourteen Years? The *Greeks* and *Persians*, with all their Stupidity, were not near so blind as this comes to.

*Cambyfes* being at *Memphis*, after he had conquer'd *Egypt*, and not knowing the Cause of certain Rejoicings that the People were then making, enquir'd into the Reason, and was very much surprized to hear that they were celebrating the Festival of the God *Apis*, who, after a long Space of Time, was now come to shew himself in public. Upon this he sent for the Priests, and said to them by way of Banter, That, if there was any Deity who was so gracious as to demean himself to the *Egyptians*, 'twas a Wonder he should conceal himself from the King; and therefore he bid them bring their God *Apis* to him. But how great was the Surprize of *Cambyfes*, when the Priests brought a Calf to him! Being exasperated to the last Degree,

gree, he drew his Dagger, and run it into the Leg of their God, who thereupon died of the Wound. *Ye Poltroons*, said he to the Priests, *are the Gods then compos'd of Blood and Flesh, and do they feel the Pricks of a Sword? Really such a God is fit for the Egyptians. But I will make you to know that you shall get nothing by abusing us, and putting a Trick upon us \**.

I am charm'd, dear *Monceca*, with the noble Indignation of *Cambyfes*, and am pleas'd to find a Pagan, notwithstanding his Idolatry, and without any other Light but Reason, sensible that the Deity could not be compos'd either of Flesh or Blood. The wretched Priests who serv'd the Calf *Apis*, were as fully convinc'd as this Monarch, of the Vileness of their pretended Deity, whom they saw decaying every Day with their own Eyes; but they found their Advantage by imposing on the Credulity of the People.

Mankind has been in all Ages the same: Some have been glad to be deceiv'd, and others to profit by the Weakness of their Brethren. To this was owing the Credit of *Apis*, and of the *Egyptian* Priests, that of the Oracles of *Delphos*, and of the Pagan *Greek*, and *Roman* Pontiffs, and in short of a multitude of *Nazarene* Chimæras, and of the Monks that invented them. Errors, instead of being destroy'd by Time, only alter their Shape, and assume a new Form. In all Ages there have arose Men of Eminence for their Merit and Learning, who were for opposing the Torrent, and combating Superstition: But they are commonly the Victims of their Zeal, and are generally oppress'd by those from whom they endeavour to pull

\* *Herodotus*, lib. i. p. 45. Translated by M. du Ryer,

off the Mask. In all Religions the Vulgar favour those most that tell them the most Chimæras and the most Fables. Thou thyself knowest how hard it was for our Brethren the *Jews* at *Constantinople* to relish thy Lessons, because thou seem'd'st to disapprove of certain Traditions which thou thought'st contrary to the Scriptures, and capable of hurting the Mind. The *Mahometans* don't much care for the *Arabian* Doctors, because they are Enemies to Miracles and Superstition. The Works of *Macrifi*, a famous Author, are not so much esteem'd as those of several *Mollas* and *Imans*, which are full of ridiculous Fables. The *Turks* accuse that Author of want of Religion, because he has related but very few Miracles, and even confuted several. They cannot bear that he shou'd charge it as a Folly, to believe that the Dead return from the other World. *Savonarola*, a Dominican Friar, smarted severely for having too publicly condemn'd the Frauds of the Court of *Rome*, and those of his Brethren. *Alexander VI*, sovereign Pontiff, found out the way to check his troublesome Remonstrances, and *Savonarola* was hang'd at *Florence*, with two of his Companions. The Blindness of some People is so gross, and the Malice of others so black, that 'tis almost impossible to open the Eyes of the one, and to mend the Hearts of the other.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, prosper in thy Undertakings, and live content and happy.



## L E T T E R LXXVIII.

*From AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
ISAAC ONIS, a Caraites, at Cairo, for-  
merly a Rabbi, at Constantinople.*

SOME Days ago I sent thee an Account, dear *Isaac*, of a Dispute that happen'd between the *Fansenists* and *Molinists*, about the Publication of a Book called the *Breviary*: This Affair is now entirely ended, for the Priests who wou'd not receive it, have submitted, and all is hush'd; but it cannot hold so long, and new Disputes will soon arise. The turbulent Temper of the *Nazarene* Priests cannot permit them to lie quiet, for to live without cabal-ling, is to the Monks a terrible Punishment. Bawling and Disputing with one another is their main Exercise, which, painful as it is, they have Schools where they learn it, and Masters who teach them this kind of Fencing.

A young Monk is train'd up at *Paris* just as a Gladiator's Apprentice was in antient *Rome*. His Regents in Philosophy and Theology teach him the Subterfuges of the *Disparates* necessary to evade the Truth; and by the Aid of a Syllogism he exercises himself in the Quest of Methods, to obscure things that are the plainest in the World. He arms himself with a multitude of Distinctions, Divisions, and Subdivisions, by the help of which he becomes invincible, or at least fearless of being oblig'd to submit to Reason and the Light of Nature. As soon as he has acquir'd this Talent, he begins to enter into the *Circus*, where he exercises it in the par-

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ticular Assemblies of his Order; and finally when he is perfect Master of the Art of attacking Reason, he rambles like another Knight-Errant in pursuit of Adventures, and is a constant Attendant at the several Theses that are maintain'd, which is a Name they give to certain public Disputations that are held upon such and such Days in the Convents of the Monks. *Aristotle*, *Scotus*, and some other School-Philosophers have more Credit in these Assemblies than Reason has; and 'tis in vain for it to demonstrate the Evidence of any one Point, if it is not approv'd by *Aristotle*, or if it be condemn'd by *St. Thomas*.

Good Sense is a Fool that must be silent, and not attempt to combat the Opinion of those Philosophers, to whom certain Monks are attach'd.

In these Assemblies, and at these Disputes, he that has the best Lungs has always the better of the Argument and Reason on his Side.

Thou would'st be astonish'd, dear *Isaac*, if thou wast to be at these Disputations, and to see with what Front these pretended Philosophers deny the most evident Points: Their Distinctions wou'd quite tire out thy Patience. I am not at all surprized if heretofore Philosophy was generally contemn'd in *France*. What could People of Sense think of all that Jumble of *imaginary Beings*, *second Intentions*, and many other Impertinencies, which were for a long time the Exercise of all the Philosophers? In order to destroy Prejudices, there was an absolute Necessity for two great Men\* to take up the *Ferula*, to correct all the pretended Scholars of their Age, and to force them to open their Eyes, and to see the Error in which they were plung'd. But notwithstanding that they perceiv'd

\* *Des Cartes* and *Gassendi*.



their Mistake, the Generality of 'em were too self-conceited to follow the Lamp of Truth.

As for the Prejudices of certain Monks that were ignorant and prepossess'd, it did not much surprize me; but I cou'd not comprehend how Men of Genius and Penetration cou'd be so far blinded as to think that *Aristotle* was given to Mankind as a Terrestrial Deity, to instruct them in all the Secrets of the Celestial one, and that the latter had reveal'd to the former all his Operations and Designs. Is it possible that such a Learned Man as *Averroes* cou'd entertain, and write such extravagant Notions\*! If *Aristotle* be the supreme Truth, 'tis needless for Men to apply hereafter to the Discovery of the Nature of Things; they can learn nothing more that is new; every thing is comprehended in the Writings of that *Greek* Philosopher. *He is the supreme Truth, and he is the Oracle that is to instruct us in every thing that is possible to be known.*

*Gassendi* was the first Man, who in the last Century had the Courage to attack the Infallibility of *Aristotle*†; but he met with almost as many Antagonists and Enemies, as the first *Jansenists* that appeal'd against the Bull *Unigenitus*. The Men of Honour are oblig'd to him for having reviv'd in the World the Use of a Rational Philosophy, to which a Gentleman may apply himself. This great Genius was follow'd by *Des Cartes*, whose new

\* *Aristotelis Doctrina est summa Veritas, quoniam ejus intellectus fuit finis humani intellectus. Quare benè dicitur de illo quod ipse fuit creatus, & datus nobis, Divinâ Providentiâ, ut non ignoremus possibilia sciri.* *Averroes*, de Gener. Anim. lib. v. cap. i.

† The first Work that made this learned Man known in the World, was the Tract *Adversus Aristotelicos*.

System gave the final Blow to the School-Philosophy, which was banish'd for good and all by the Monks; and those truly learned Men so well restor'd the Sciences, and so good an Opinion was conceiv'd of them, that fifteen Years after the Impression of *Des Cartes's* Works, the very Women argued much more sensibly in Metaphysics, than three fourths of the Divines in that Kingdom. Since that time, People have grown more and more in love with Philosophy. All the better Sort apply to it; and even the Courtiers, notwithstanding the Pleasures and Intrigues of a noisy Court, spend some part of the Day in the Study of it. There are many of the Magistrates, who unbend their Minds from the harsh and toilsome Study of the Law, by the Reading of the Books of able Naturalists.

Since it has been permitted to condemn an Absurdity, tho' advanced by *Aristotle* or *St. Thomas*, and since the Reputation of those Philosophers is no longer the Bane of sound Reason, the Sciences, and especially Natural Philosophy, have been brought to infinite Perfection. The *occult Qualities* are no longer consider'd in any other Light than as a Confession of the Ignorance of the Effects of a Thing; and besides the Discoveries for which we are oblig'd to the new Philosophy, we are oblig'd to it also for the Means of knowing how to judge solidly of what it teaches, and prevented from thinking we know what we are ignorant of.

At the rate that People study now 'tis certain that more Truths are to be discover'd in thirty Years time, than were known before in two thousand. As People argue only upon evident Principles, and nothing is taken for certain but what is manifest, Reason which is no longer clouded

clouded by a Number of Errors that enslav'd it, acts with greater Efficacy, and more easily unfolds the Secrets it aims to discover.

*Mankind*, says an eminent Philosopher, *not only run into very many Errors, because they busy themselves in Questions that partake of Infinity, their Mind being at the same time Finite, but also because they apply to those which are of a very vast Comprehension while their Minds are narrow* \*. That's another inexhaustible Source of the Errors of the ancient Philosophy. It took in Questions the Human Understanding cou'd not resolve, and which are beyond its Reach. The School-Philosophers apply'd themselves to few solid things, but fed on Chimæras, and only study'd things that were either incomprehensible or insignificant; and from a secret Vanity, and an irregular Passion for Knowledge, they sought to penetrate into the most secret and most impenetrable Truths. They pretended to resolve with ease several Questions that were unintelligible, and depending on so many Circumstances that 'twas impossible for the most penetrating Genius to discover the Truth of them with evident Certainty, after many Ages profound Meditation, tho' assisted by an infinite Number of Experiments.

Another Fault which confounded the Understanding of the School-Philosophers, was the little Method they observ'd in their Studies: They apply'd themselves to ten different Sciences perhaps in one Day; they did not reflect upon the Nature of their Understanding, nor employ it in the Search of Truth, and did not consider that the Mind of Men already too much circumscribed, ought not to be diverted from its Meditations

\* *Mallebranche's Search after Truth, lib. iii. cap. 3. p. 107.*

by new Objects, which often erase the preceding ones out of the Memory. All the Smatterers in Learning, who are liable to this Fault, endeavour in vain to penetrate into things that depend on a great many others, of which they have no Knowledge nor Perception, because they don't make due Reflection, and are too much distracted in their Studies.

*Des Cartes* was only oblig'd for most part of his Discoveries, to the *Methods he made use of in his Studies, to hinder his capacious Mind from rambling to any other Objects but those of which he aim'd to discover the Truth* \*. Therefore how clear and distinct are the Ideas upon which he has establish'd the Principles of his Philosophy? I know very well that this great Man was not infallible, and that his Writings, tho' they abound with Truths, which had not been known but for him, have a Tincture in some Parts of Human Weakness. But 'tis ridiculous to think that a Philosopher must write nothing but what is evident. 'Tis enough if he gives doubtful Things as doubtful, and only proposes them to his Readers as meer Conjectures.

If the School-Philosophers had been as honest and modest as *Des Cartes*, a great many Errors which have been warmly maintain'd for Ages together, wou'd have been acknowledg'd long ago. Instead of those vain Disputes which only serv'd to perplex Reason, the Learned wou'd have communicated their Reflections to one another sincerely, and perhaps have clear'd up what they did not comprehend, tho' it was earnestly disputed. Huge unwieldy Volumes were written, which were only full of Words, and convey'd nothing at all to the Understanding. One plain Question in Natural

† *Mallebranche's Search after Truth, lib. i. p. 102.*

Philosophy clear'd up in two Pages by *Des Cartes*, wou'd have serv'd for a Book in Folio. In justice to *Aristotle*, it must be confess'd that his Natural Philosophy is much more tolerable, when stripp'd of the whimsical Notions which his various Commentators have added to it. It may even be said that this Philosopher had a most capacious Genius: He succeeded perfectly well in what he said of the Passions in his Rhetoric; and there are very fine things in both his political and moral Tracts: But as to his eight Books of Natural Philosophy, they discover nothing but what was known before, and scarce any thing but what was impossible not to be known. What Man is there that does not know that Matter cannot be said to have a new Form, if it had the same before\*? Who doubts that every thing depends upon Form, and that Matter alone does nothing? surely no Man is wiser, after having known these things, than he was before. The eight Books of *Aristotle's* Natural Philosophy appertain rather to Logic, than to Physics: They are only vague and general Definitions of Terms, which convey only confus'd Ideas to the Understanding. *Aristotle*, for Example, says indeed that there are four Elements, Fire, Air, Water and Earth, but he does not shew the Nature of 'em, and from all his Reasonings no just Idea of them can be conceiv'd. *He wou'd not even have it supposed that those Elements are the Fire, Air, Water and Earth which we see*, because then our Senses cou'd not help communicating some Knowledge of them at least to us; but he endeavours to explain them by the Qualities of Heat, Cold, Moisture, Drought, Weight and Levity. How could Men of any Understanding content themselves with so

\* That is to say, unless it be depriv'd of the former.

loose an Explanation, which is attended with so many ridiculous Impertinences? I don't wonder at it, because out of their Deference to the Opinions of that Philosopher, they were so complaisant as to admit, that Nothing was the first Principle of Things. For what does the Privation of all Beings mean but a Nothing, a meer Nothing?

*Montaigne* calculated the Rise and Fall of the Principles of *Aristotle's* Philosophy, at a Time when the *Nazarenes* in general look'd upon them as infallible Oracles. *Before*, said that Author, *the Principles that were introduc'd by Aristotle, came in Vogue, other Principles contented Human Reason as they do at this Time. What Letters Patent, what special Privilege can they plead to stop the farther Course of our Invention, and to engross our Belief for all Times to come? They are no more exempt from being turn'd out of Doors than were those of our Antients* †. What *Montaigne* said has happen'd. He foresaw that Reason wou'd at length pierce thro' the Cloud; he himself despised the Philosophy of *Aristotle*, and he knew all the Defects of it.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live contented and happy.

† *Montaigne's* Essays, lib. v. p. 141.





# L E T T E R LXXIX.

*From* JACOB BRITO, *at* Montpellier,  
*to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

I N my Journey from *Lyons* to *Montpellier*, where I arriv'd two Days ago, I was glad to make use of the Information which thou gavest me of the Manners of the *French*; for if I had not been prepossess'd of their Character, I know not what I shou'd have thought of most of the People with whom I travell'd.

I went down the *Rhone* to *Pont St. Esprit* in the Passage-boat, where were above thirty of us in Company, Men and Women. There were Priests, Friars, Nurfes, Soldiers, Officers, Merchants, Dogs, Cats, Squirrels, and what not; so that our Boat was pretty much like *Noah's Ark*: I endeavour'd to get into a Corner, as far as I could from the Racket that two young Fellows made about who shou'd set next to a very pretty young Lass, who being almost as silly as the Lads, laugh'd with her Mouth wide open at their Quarrel. A Gaiety and Satisfaction appear'd in her Countenance, and by certain Looks she gave to the other Women, she did as good as tell them that she well deserv'd such Courtship.

During this Dispute, an elderly Officer who sat between a Friar and me, began to light his Pipe: The old Soldier every now and then look'd with an evil Eye at his Neighbour the Friar, who was of such a bulky Corporation that he took up three

quarters of his Room. He was in an ill Humour to be so straiten'd by this Friar, but he was soon deliver'd from him: He had hardly began to smoak, but the Reverend Father, not accusom'd to the Smell of Tobacco, made strange Grimaces. The Officer perceiving this, affected to throw the Smoak in his Face, which made the Friar fret and frown the more, so that he had like to have fallen into a Convulsion. Mean time he never budg'd from his Place, but sate fast, being loth to quit a Post that he had chose as the best in the Boat. The Officer perceiving that he cou'd gain no Ground of him, was resolv'd to joke him as well as funk him. *Father*, said he, *I fancy you have an Aversion to Tobacco.* *Alas, Sir!* said the Monk, who thought the Officer was going to lay down his Pipe, *I have a mortal Antipathy to it.* *If that be the Case*, said the Military Blade very gravely, *I wou'd advise you never to smoak.* And at the same time he puff'd out two such abominable Whiffs of Tobacco, as had like to have suffocated the poor Friar, who fell a coughing as if he wou'd have brought his Heart up. When he was a little recover'd, he call'd out to the Waterman, *Friend*, said he, *the Orders are that there shou'd be no smoaking in your Boat, see that they are obey'd.* *You are in the right*, *Father*, said the Master of the Vessel, *and the Captain will be so good, if he please, to leave off smoaking.* *Hark ye*, *Scoundrel*, reply'd the Officer, *all that I will be so good to do is, to thresh thee soundly with a Cudgel, and then throw thee into the River.* *By G—d thou art a pleasant Rascal indeed, to pretend to give the Word of Command, where I am.* *Sir*, said he, turning towards me, *don't you think it a good jest, that after having serv'd the King my Master thirty years together, I shan't have the Privilege of smoaking before a Lay-Brother?* *You might use better Language*, reply'd the Friar, *for I have*



have been a Priest longer than you have been in the Service. *Why then, said the Officer, say Mass, and sing Vespers if you will, I shan't hinder you.* The Friar was still for pressing the Boat-man to execute his Orders; *Faith, reply'd he to him, you who can preach so well, reverend Father, do you endeavour to persuade the Gentleman: As for my part, I shan't go to pick a Quarrel with People that are above my Match. I have been baptiz'd already, and don't care to be thrown into the River. Take my Advice for once, Reverend Father, excommunicate the Gentleman; then perhaps he will obey you.* This scurvy Drollery of the Boat-man, who aim'd to pacify the Wrath of the Officer, made the Friar quite mad. He abandon'd his Place at last, and shifted his Quarters to another Corner of the Vessel. *You have no Notion,* said the Officer then to me, *of this Monkish Race; they are as troublesome to Travellers, as Creditors to young Fellows; and if one was to be ruled by these Sheep-stealing Friars, we shou'd be oblig'd to constrain ourselves in every thing that they don't like.*

While the Officer was talking to me in this way, we came to the Place we were to dine at. As soon as we got out of the Boat, the Friar said to me very courteously, *Pray, Sir, what did you think of that Officer's Behaviour? The Men of that Profession are intolerably rough and haughty, and shew no Regard to Persons that deserve the greatest Respect. It looks as if they thought they had a Right to treat their Company, as they treat the King's Enemies. I had rather travel with half a score 'Prentice-Boys, than one of these Kill-Devil Captains.*

The Monk had no sooner left me to go into the Inn, but one of those young Fellows who had made such a Clutter to sit near the young Wench, came to me with a smiling insipid Air, *I really pity'd you,*

Sir, said he, for what you suffer'd this Morning; you had a very ill Situation in the Boat; those Friars know nothing but how to mutter their Breviary: And those old Military Heçtors are very troublesome; they are eternally roaring and bawling out, or they surfeit you with the Accounts of the Battles they have been at. You wou'd have been perfectly merry if you had sate, where we did; for we laugh'd, as you saw, all the Way; and I advise you in the Afternoon to place yourself near us.

A tall thin Man, who had not spoke one Word all the Way, shrugg'd up his Shoulders and lifted up his Eyes at what the young Blockhead said; and as I return'd to the Boat to fetch something that I had forgot, he took the Opportunity to speak to me privately, and said, Suffer me, as a Fellow-Traveler, to give you a piece of Advice; Take care how you associate by the way with that young Fellow, or else expect to be teaz'd with more Questions, Impertinencies, and Nonsense, in two Hours Time, than you was ever plagu'd with in your Life. I speak this by Experience, for in the Voyage I have already made with him, what with his talking, whistling, and singing, he has made me deaf. Sometimes he does those three different things all at once, and it often happens that he adds a fourth, and that he dances and capers, talks, whistles, and sings at the same time. In short, he is the most petulant Mortal under the Sun. The Tone of the Man's Voice, his grave Countenance, and his lean, hagg'd Form, made me long to know who, and what he was. After having thank'd him for his Advice, I ask'd him if he was going very far off? I am going, said he, to Montpellier, upon account of a troublesome Distemper that I am afflicted with; and what is worse to me than all, 'tis an Ailment that I have not deserv'd; I am suffering Penance, in short, for the Sins of my false Spouse. How, Sir, said I,  
cou'd

*cou'd so dear a Creature as she possibly hurt you? To be sure, if she has been the Occasion of your Misfortunes, it must be innocently. I'll tell you, reply'd the Man, in a few Words, the Cause of my Misfortunes.*

‘ When I was very young, I apply’d myself to  
 ‘ the Study of Philosophy, and endeavour’d to pe-  
 ‘ netrate into the Nature of Things: At length,  
 ‘ after a good deal of Pains and Patience, I thought  
 ‘ it high time to join the Practice to the Theory.  
 ‘ I prepar’d my Furnaces, directed my Fire, and  
 ‘ began to put into Execution what had cost me so  
 ‘ much Labour to learn. My Employment neces-  
 ‘ sarily took me up so much constant Attendance,  
 ‘ that I had not Time to inspect the Behaviour of  
 ‘ my Wife; who perceiving me in such a fair  
 ‘ Way of making Gold, and of attaining the Phi-  
 ‘ losopher’s Stone, was resolv’d likewise on her part  
 ‘ to take some Pains for an Estate; but the best  
 ‘ Expedient she cou’d think of was, to have a Num-  
 ‘ ber of Lovers; and she play’d her Cards so well,  
 ‘ that in a little Time she acquir’d a very hand-  
 ‘ some Fortune. ’Tis true, there was something  
 ‘ mix’d with her Riches, which gave her a great  
 ‘ deal of Mortification; and that was when she  
 ‘ found the Necessity she was under of the Assist-  
 ‘ ance of the God *Mercury*, to repair certain Da-  
 ‘ mage which had been done by the Goddess *Venus*.  
 ‘ The worst of it was, that these Consequences  
 ‘ quite ruin’d my Health: My Wife, fearing that  
 ‘ I shou’d resent this Adventure, elop’d one Day  
 ‘ with a Poet of my Acquaintance, and I know  
 ‘ not whither they are gone. Yet that’s not what  
 ‘ troubles me, but the being forc’d to abandon my  
 ‘ Furnaces for some time, to go in quest of some  
 ‘ Remedy for my Distemper; Health being one of  
 ‘ the principal Things that a Virtuoso ought to be  
 ‘ possess’d

‘ possess’d of, who hopes to be Master of the Philosopher’s Stone.’

I was overjoy’d, dear *Monceca*, that I had met with a Person that I cou’d talk with concerning the Stories that are told about the pretended Philosopher’s Stone. ‘ Pray, Sir, *said I*, is it really in the Power of Men to be Master of it? I confess that hitherto I have taken what has been said upon this Science, for meer Tales.’ ‘ You were therefore to blame, *said he*. ’Tis true, there are very few People to whom God has given the Power of attaining to the perfect Knowledge of so precious an Art. But the Reality of such Art is not a thing to be doubted of. There is much more of this Gold made in *Europe* by the Artists, than what is brought from the *Indies*, *Peru*, and other Places. All the Directors of the Mints in *France* own, that they every Year receive much more of this Gold and Silver, than is imported from foreign Countries. The most skilful Goldsmiths don’t doubt that there are of these true Artists. They say too, that their Gold is much more perfect than that which is extracted from the Mines, and they pretend ’tis an easy Matter to distinguish it.

‘ The Operation of the Philosopher’s Stone, *continued the Chymist*, is very possible, and I hope in time to make a happy Experiment of it. ’Tis true, that a vast deal of Labour and Pains is requisite to attain to it. A Man ought, in the first place, to be well acquainted with Nature: He must be endow’d with a Patience, Proof against all cross Accidents: He shou’d be a Man of a strong and vigorous Constitution; and if any one of these Qualities are wanting in him that attempts to find this Grand Arcanum, he does but torment himself

‘ himself to no purpose, for he can never bring it  
‘ to bear.’ ‘ May I presume, *said I to the Chymist,*  
‘ to ask you if, by pursuing the Principles which  
‘ are laid down in the Books that treat of this Sci-  
‘ ence, one may hope to be perfect in it?’ ‘ There  
‘ are few good Books, *said he,* in the great Num-  
‘ ber of those which are very much cry’d up, and  
‘ which are only written by Knaves and Impostors,  
‘ who bring this precious Art into Disgrace. Of  
‘ all our Authors, *King Geber* is the most learned  
‘ and the clearest; yet a Man must be a good Phi-  
‘ losopher, and perfectly acquainted with Nature,  
‘ to understand him. According to that great Man,  
‘ the true Way of attaining to Perfection in this  
‘ grand Secret is, *to incorporate the Mineral Spirits,*  
‘ when they are purify’d by the Art, with the per-  
‘ fect Bodies of the Metals, after being first ren-  
‘ der’d volatile, and then fix’d, taking care to pre-  
‘ serve all the radical Moisture, and augmenting  
‘ the natural Heat by a reasonable Concoction of  
‘ the Compound, which is form’d by this wonder-  
‘ ful Fermentation, and which causes the whole  
‘ Mass to boil and ferment; so that the Compound  
‘ insinuates itself into the most subtle Parts of the  
‘ melted Metal, purges it of all its Dross, matures  
‘ it, and changes it into Gold.’

‘ I wish, *said I to the Chymist,* that your Experi-  
‘ ments may succeed according to your Heart’s De-  
‘ sire, and that you may have better Luck in search  
‘ of the Philosopher’s Stone, than you have had in  
‘ Matrimony. By your way of talking, I perceive  
‘ that you are thorough Master of the Subject of  
‘ your Employment; yet I have heard several able  
‘ Philosophers say, that the Beginning of this Art  
‘ was Deceitful, the Middle of it Painful, and the  
‘ End of it Beggary.’

The Chymist endeavour'd to make me alter my Opinion, and assur'd me, that such as with Diligence and Courage sought after this Secret, were at last amply rewarded for their Care and Pains. However he own'd to me, that he had already spent three fourths of his Estate, but he hop'd to compass the Work before he had wasted the Remainder. He only wanted the Return of his Health to rekindle his Furnaces, and to bring his Composition to the utmost Degree of Perfection. I found him so infatuated and prepossess'd in favour of his Art, that I did not think it proper to attempt to beat it out of his Head. I had several other Conversations with him before we came to this City, in which he was continually extolling the Excellence of the Philosopher's Stone; but since our Arrival at *Montpellier* I have not seen him, and perhaps he is already in the Hands of the *Æsculapij* of this Country; of which in my next.

Take good Care of thyself, dear *Monceca*; and live content and happy.



## L E T T E R LXXX.

*From* AARON MONCECA, at Paris, to  
JACOB BRITO, at Montpellier.

THIS City is as much the Centre of Ridicule, as it is of a good Taste and Politeness; and it may be said, dear *Brito*, to contain the two opposite Extremes, which have each a great Number of Adherents in it; for as the Sciences are cultivated, cherish'd, and courted by a great Number of Gentlemen,

men, so Folly is indulg'd here to the last Degree, by the most impertinent People in *Europe*. As these are very numerous, they often counterbalance the Authority and Decisions of Men of Sense, and draw the silly Vulgar along with 'em, who are always Dupes to such as are inclin'd to cheat them. These form the Retinue of that Power which is in weak and prejudic'd Fanatics, who make good Sense groan under Oppression, and determine Men of the greatest Abilities to let Error take its free Course. I am sensible that 'tis very mortifying for Men of true Learning to be perpetually oblig'd to give Rules to a Rabble of conceited Fools, who are often so very impertinent as to despise the most useful Discoveries, and the most perfect Works. The most surprizing thing of all is, that among those who cabal against the truly learned ones, we find Persons sometimes that have a Genius, Penetration, and a good Share of Learning too. What I say, dear *Brito*, may at first View appear to thee to be a strange Paradox; but when thou reflectest on the fantastical Humour of Men, and how ambitious the greatest part of Mankind are to render themselves singular, and to give themselves a Lustre by maintaining the most extraordinary Opinions, thou wilt no longer wonder to see Men of Learning give a Sanction sometimes to the Fooleries of the common People, and even invent new ones.

A *Nazarene* Fryar \* maintain'd the most extravagant System that cou'd be conceiv'd by the most distemper'd Brain, yet he was a Monk of Wit, and wrote very well; but his Ambition was to be the Head of the most impertinent Sect that ever rose against the Antients. He did not give himself the Trouble to discuss what Faults might be found

\* Father *Hardouin* the Jesuit.

in their Works; for he cut the Matter short, and maintain'd that the Books of the Antients, both *Greek* and *Latin*, were after all but the Manuscripts of certain Monks since their Time, who had borrow'd the Names of the antient Authors. For Example; he deny'd that the *Æneid* which we have, was written by an Author that liv'd in the Time of *Augustus*. Nevertheless, among the Writers whom he pronounc'd to be apocryphal, he spar'd the Works of *Pliny the Naturalist*, and quoted them sometimes to give Credit to his wretched Arguments; but fell unmercifully upon all the *Nazarene* Doctors, so that not one of 'em found quarter at his Hand.

So foolish a Supposition, for which this Monk was by way of Banter call'd, *Pere éternel des Petites Maisons*; i. e. The Eternal Father of the Mad-houses, was smartly taken to pieces, and confuted by several learned Men, who reduc'd it to nothing\*; yet it had its Adherents, so ridiculous as it was, and so contrary to good Sense and the Light of Nature. The Love of Singularity and Novelty, brought it into such Vogue with the *French*, and with Foreigners too, as lasted till the Delusion was dissipated, and Reason regain'd its Ascendant.

A Man must be quite stupid to imagine that the Works of the *Greek* and *Latin* Authors, which are come down to us, were compos'd at *St. Denis* in a

\* See particularly the *Vindiciæ veterum Scriptorum contra J. Harduinum*, by the celebrated M. la Croze. See also the *Miles Macedonicus* of the learned *Norris*. The Reasons which put Father *Hardouin* upon the Invention of this celebrated System, are very well explain'd in the fourth Letter of the *Secret Memoirs of the Republic of Letters*; to which if the Reader will please to turn his Eye, he will supply the Want of what cou'd not find room in this Letter.



Convent of Monks; for 'tis there that this Impostor pretends that all Antiquity was forg'd. But I demand, how 'twas possible that the *Greeks*, who successively possess'd the MSS. of their Authors in their Libraries, cou'd agree to burn, or tear them to pieces, and to admit others that were forg'd in their Names in this Monastery? Tho' *Xenophon, Homer, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, Diodorus of Sicily, &c.* had been wrote over again, how cou'd they find their Way into the Libraries of the *Greeks*, which were at that time only full of those Authors? How cou'd the counterfeit ones be taken in change for the true ones? But perhaps it will be said, that there was no Book in *Greece*, and that the *Greeks* cou'd neither read nor write some time after *Constantine*: And the Foundation of this Hypothesis cannot be supported, but by advancing this impertinent Absurdity; for if it be allow'd that the *Greeks* had Eyes, and cou'd both read and write, by consulting the last Authors who have wrote of our Times, and tracing them successively back to those who are the most antient, we shall find they have all quoted one another, and reported Passages out of those that have gone before. The Authors of the fourteenth Century have quoted those of the thirteenth; those of the thirteenth have quoted their Predecessors of the twelfth and eleventh Centuries; and by thus always going higher up, we come easily to the Source of the Originals rejected. At what Time was there any Appearance observ'd of the Forgery of the antient Authors? How can it be imagin'd that the *Greeks* were so complaisant as to receive for authentic, Writings which they saw sprung up in one Night like Mushrooms, and of whose Authors they had no Knowledge? I demand what they wou'd have said when they saw Works  
come

come out all of a sudden, of which they cou'd never have had the least Notion. Is it likely that all Men, by common Consent, wou'd have given implicit Credit to those Writings, and not one of 'em have declar'd the same Diffidence as the Friar *Hardouin*? Surely there wou'd have been Ground for it; and if it shou'd be said now, that the *Medea* of *Ovid*, and the *Thyestes* of *Varius* are recover'd, which indeed may possibly happen, how thoroughly wou'd those Pieces be examined, how many Men wou'd write *pro* or *con*, either to prove them genuine, or to explode them? Of this Fact the Works of *Petronius* are an evident Proof.

They who maintain that ridiculous Hypothesis, which tends to render the precious Remains of Antiquity suspicious, rely very much upon the Ignorance of the Times when those Authors were counterfeited. But consider, dear *Brito*, how one absurd Argument necessarily brings with it another. How foolish, or rather how stupid is it to think that the Works of *Demosthenes*, *Quintilian*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Perfius*, &c. are the Productions of an Age drown'd in Ignorance \*? What! can Stupidity and gross

Ignor-

\* This Passage wants to be more clearly explain'd: For among the few Works which Father *Hardouin* looks upon as really antient, he numbers the Satires and the Epistles of *Horace*, and the Georgics of *Virgil*; but he rejects all *Horace's* Odes, and *Virgil's* *Æneid*. He had discover'd, as he says, that some Ages ago, I know not how many, several Persons united and undertook to compose the antient History, which was entirely lost. He is exactly inform'd of the Age in which those People liv'd, as well as of the Place where they compos'd their Works. For all their Monuments of Antiquity were only *Cicero*, *Pliny*, the Georgics of *Virgil*, the Satires, and the Epistles of *Horace*. He thinks that we had no  
other

Ignorance produce that which the profoundest Learning and the most painful Study are scarce able to imitate? The eminent Historians of this Age have the same Respect for *Titus Livy*, as *Statius* had for the *Æneid*, which he in a manner ador'd \*.

Do but consider, dear *Brito*, who are the Men that they name for the Authors of Works, whose Gallantry and Delicacy are still Patterns for the nicest Courtiers of this Age. They are Monks that are said to have compos'd the *Heroides*, and *Ovid's Art of Love*, and Dunces that are the Inventors of *Demosthenes's Philippics*, and the Works of *Plutarch*. But some of these Coxcombs, in the *Republic of Letters*, tell us, that the Men who compos'd those Works, had Wit; but they who bought and receiv'd them, were Fools. I demand if it was possible that Genius shou'd be confin'd only to seven or eight Persons shut up in one House? And if it be answer'd, That all the Reason and Wisdom

other Monuments of Antiquity but those, except some Fasti, and a very few Inscriptions. *Deprehendit ille — Cætum certorum Hominum ante sæcula nescio quot extitisse, qui Historiæ veteris concinnandæ Partes suscepissent, qualem nunc habemus, cum nulla tunc extaret. Sibi probè notam illorum Ætatem, atque Officinam esse, inque eam Rem istis Subsidio fuisse Tullium, Plinium, Maronis Georgica, Flacci Sermones & Epistolas; nam hæc illa sola censet — ex omni Latinitate sincera Monumenta, præter Inscriptiones admodum paucas, Fastosque nonnullos. Harduini Chronologia ex Nummis antiquis restituta.* Prolus. pag. 60.

\* — Nec tu divinam Æneïda tenta,  
Sed longè sequere, & Vestigia semper adora.

*Stat. Thebaid.*

‘Th’ Æneid shines in too Divine a Sphere,  
‘Trace it with Awe, and ever it revere.’

of Mankind were not confin'd to one single Monastery, it must be own'd that other learned Men dispers'd in the several Parts of *Europe*, and who there compos'd the Works that we have at this Day, wou'd have made some mention of those Forgers of the antient Writings.

Really, dear *Brito*, every Man who maintains the System of this Friar *Hardouin*, must take his Choice either to pass for a Fool, or a Fanatic; and 'tis shewing them too much Indulgence, to go about to confute such a Heap of Absurdities. One Reason why the Enemies of the antient Authors suspect the Works of *Virgil* to be of doubtful Authority, is this; *Pliny* the Naturalist, say they, speaks of a *Virgil*, Author of the *Bucolics*, but does not mention one Word of the *Æneid*; therefore the *Æneid* which we have, is not by the same *Virgil* as the *Bucolics*. I can't help smiling, dear *Brito*, while I acquaint thee of this absurd Argument: I shou'd think it might be as well said thirty or forty Years hence, that the Psalms were not translated into *French Verse* by *Marot*, because *Boileau*, who mentions the Works of that Poet, does not say a Word of that Version. What wou'd the World think of a Man, who two or three hundred Years hence shou'd attempt to prove, that the Tragedy of *Bajazet* was not written by *Racine*, tho', by the way, 'tis one of that Author's best Pieces, because his Friend *Despreaux* spoke of all that Poet's other Plays, but never made mention of that?

Undoubtedly, dear *Brito*, thou wilt be at a Loss to guess at the Reasons which determin'd this Monk to maintain so surprizing an Hypothesis. I was as much to seek for them as thee, till some learned Men of this Country discover'd the Mystery of the whole Affair to me, together with the secret  
Springs

Springs by which this brain-sick Impostor was actuated. He was a Member of a Society \* that was at utter Enmity with another †, which has publish'd several Editions of the *Greek and Latin Nazarene* Doctors. These Books having been receiv'd by the Public with universal Applause, stirr'd up the Jealousy and Envy of *Hardouin's* Brethren. To defeat the Authority of these Editions, he was resolv'd to cancel the Antiquity of those Authors; and the better to reconcile the *Nazarenes* to his Sentiment, who might justly have been disgusted at the Contempt shewn for their antient Doctors, this Monk thought to extenuate the Crime of his System, by giving all the antient Authors in general a later Date, and insinuating that they were for the most part written by the Monks who were the Predecessors of those who now plead for their Antiquity.

That, dear *Brito*, was the Cause of the ridiculous Opinion started in these latter Days against the most celebrated Writers, and embrac'd by some Novices who thought to make short Work with Wit, and to give themselves a Reputation by applauding such Impertinences.

I shou'd be glad if I had some News to impart to thee; but for some Days past *Paris* seems to be pretty quiet. However, its present Tranquility is not like to continue long; and the inconstant Humour of the *French* wou'd soon supply me with a thousand new Amusements for the Subjects of my Letters, if I did not intend to leave this Country forthwith. I shall shortly set out for *Flanders*,

\* That of the *Jesuits*.

† The Congregation of *St. Maur*.

to make an End of some Affair which I have at *Brussels*; and from thence I shall not fail to write to thee.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and may the God of our Fathers abundantly prosper thee.

*End of the SECOND VOLUME.*



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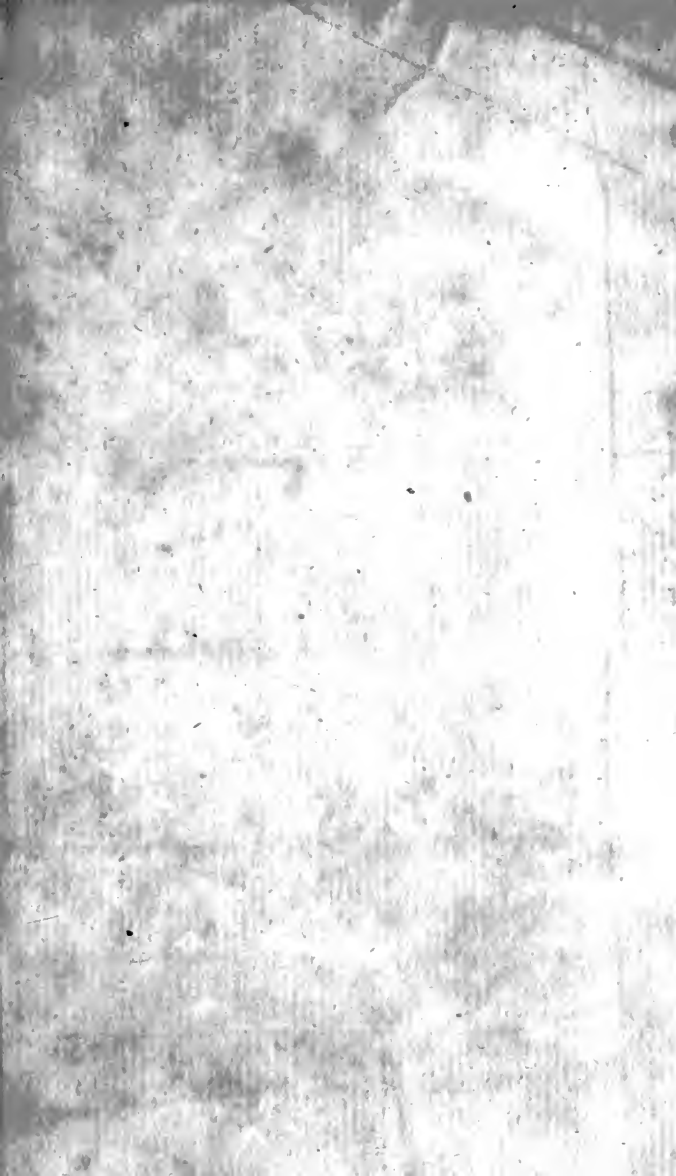
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